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PEN AND INK SKETCHES.



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# PEN AND INK SKETCHES

OF

AUTHORS AND AUTHORESSES.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "PEN PICTURES OF POPULAR  
ENGLISH PREACHERS," ETC.

[John Dix]

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L O N D O N :

P A R T R I D G E A N D O A K E Y .

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M D C C C L I I .





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# PEN-AND-INK SKETCHES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.—A SKETCH OF THE SKETCHER.

“Hampstead, March, 1851.

“DEAR SIR,

“My poor husband is much worse this evening, and expresses an anxious desire to see you. Do, if possible, come and spend to-morrow with us; indeed, as George takes no excuse from his oldest and dearest friend, we shall confidently expect you.

“Faithfully yours,

“E. M.”

Such was the invitation which I received late on Saturday evening, on my return from one of the theatres. Fresh as I was from scenes of life and gaiety, the note threw a damp on my spirits, which felt like an omen. The illness of my friend had

long been known to me ; but I had regarded his indisposition as but a slight affair, which change of air and rest from occupation would most probably remove. I was, however, to be undeceived.

George M—— and myself had known each other almost from childhood ; and similarity in the choice of a profession had increased our intimacy ; and an ardent love of poetry cemented, still more firmly, our friendship. Together we attended the various courses of lectures, and almost hand-in-hand we walked the wards of St. Bartholomew's Hospital ; and when the terms of our pupilage expired, as if one spirit actuated us both, we “cut” the profession of medicine, and, as Coleridge says of Chatterton,

“Sublime of hope, and confident of fame,”

we launched on the sea of literary labour, fully persuaded that we had only to repair to London, the great reservoir of talent, and carry all before us.

The great error we committed, in abandoning *in-fusions* for *ex-fusions*—the practice of physic for the pursuits of literature, is evident enough to a clear judgment, and a more observant eye than I formerly possessed.

To quote again from the author of the *Ancient Mariner*—“Literature makes a very good walking-stick, but a sorry crutch.” For years I found it to

be so ; and were I to relate the struggles, the heart-achings, the privations, which M—— and I endured before we got footing on the lowest step of the remunerative ladder of Letters, my revelations would perhaps be condemned as the ravings of romance, or the coinings of fiction.

A far abler hand than mine has pointed out the perils incident to the commencement of a literary career.

When Bernard Barton, the Quaker Poet, held the situation of clerk in a banking establishment, at Woodbridge, in Suffolk, he contemplated abandoning his snug and certain profession for the chances and changes of a literary life. He accordingly wrote to Charles Lamb, asking his advice on the matter, and he thus replied :—

“Throw yourself on the world, without any rational plan of support beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you !—Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the steep Tarpeian Rock, slap-dash headlong, upon iron spikes. If you have but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arms’ length from them—come not within their grip. I have known many authors

want for bread—some repining, others enjoying the blessed security of a country-house—all agreeing they had rather have been tailors, weavers—what not? rather than the things they were. I have known some starved—some go mad—one dear friend literally dying in a work-house. Oh! you know not—may you never know, the miseries of subsisting by authorship!”

Perhaps there may be some exaggeration here; indeed, from experience, I know that there is; for I am acquainted with many authors who live by their profession quietly and comfortably, labouring at the stated sum per sheet as regularly as the weaver at his loom, or the tailor at his board; but dignified with the consciousness of following a high and ennobling occupation, with all the mighty minds of past ages as their daily friends and companions. Truly has it been said, that the bane of such a life, when actual genius is involved, in its uncertainties and its temptations, and the almost invariable incompatibility of the poetical temperament with habits of business and steady application. Yet, let us remember the examples of Shakspeare, Dryden, and Pope—all constant labourers—and, in our own day, of Scott, Southey, Moore, and others. The fault is more generally with the author than with the bookseller.

Months passed on, and, as I have intimated,

M—— and myself had hard work ; but our way of life had its charms. What ! though now and then we were compelled to visit the pawnbroker's shop, or write an occasional song for an obscure publisher, or to dine with Duke Humphrey, yet we at least enjoyed the pleasure of associating with many of the "celebrities" of the day, and of forgetting poverty and privation in the society of men of genius. At length Fortune smiled on her wooers. M——, in consequence of an able article of his which appeared in a morning paper, was offered the editorship of a newly started journal in the metropolis ; and I was fortunate enough to receive a favourable reply to an application which I made to the proprietor of a country newspaper, who wanted a "gentleman of ability, &c.," to manage it. Were I so inclined, I could write a volume of my own "experiences" as a country newspaper editor, and may do so some day ; but at present I have other work to do. M——, then, and myself, made a fresh start ; he toiling, Sisypheus-like, day after day, and night after night, in the Great Babylon ; and I, half-buried alive, in a country town, doing the drudgery of the ——— Gazette ; M——, in his new position, freely mixing in the society of the best and the brightest,—I condemned to dwell in a remote region, where the very name of literature was

unknown, and which was only famous for the fatness of its soil and the folly of its gentlemen.

Ten years passed away before M—— and myself met again. I had not heard from him of late, as he had, after seven years of ceaseless toil, quitted the paper which he conducted, in consequence of ill health. In the hope that change would benefit him, he had visited America, a country he had long desired to see. The sudden changes of temperature, however, in the New World, and the extremes of heat and cold, proved injurious rather than beneficial, and when he returned to England he was unmistakeably consumptive.

On our meeting, after so long an interval, I scarcely need say, that I was greatly shocked by the change in his appearance. I had again settled in London. He had removed to Hampstead, (that paradise of Cockneydom,) so that our intimacy was renewed. Few days passed without our meeting in his neat little study, which overlooked the heath; and then, on bright summer evenings might M—— be seen, propped by pillows, in his easy chair, near the window, gazing on the scenes which he was soon to behold no more for ever. And when night came, and the curtains were drawn, and the fire blazed, it was his delight to relate his reminiscences of great people, or popular places which he had seen, or visited, either



abroad or at home. Gifted with a most tenacious memory, he was enabled with unerring accuracy to describe these, even in their minutiae, and this he did so graphically, that the incidents he described were almost daguerreotype, like on the listener's mind.

When, in obedience to my friend's wife, I visited him, on the day after I received the note, with which this chapter commences, I at once saw that the silver chord would speedily be loosed, and the golden bowl broken. His mind, however, was as clear as ever; and on that last interview, for it *was* the last, he conversed with even more than his usual ease and power. It was, alas! but the flashing of the taper before its extinguishment.

"Do you know," he remarked, "that since I have been compelled to give up the society of living literary people, that I have visits from many of those who have long since ceased to inhabit this world!"

For a moment I fancied his mind was wandering: he continued:—

"My dear D——, that old fashioned chair in which you are sitting is frequently occupied by the very persons who perused those books on the shelves yonder. I fancy I can see the authors of all those goodly tomes step from between the covers of their works, for the especial purpose of

keeping me company. See, here are some verses which the visits of these "shining ones" have suggested. And he handed me the following:—

### VISION IN MY LIBRARY.

SAID'ST thou—friend and poet,\* perished,  
Said, ere Reason paled its ray,  
Of thy books, so loved and cherished,  
"Never failing friends are they."

Ah ! we never need be dreary,  
While such fruitful store we find ;  
Banquets spread, for spirits weary,  
By regenerated mind !

Wealth may flee, and friends deceive us,—  
Love may veil his sunny looks,—  
But those treasures never leave us  
Which we garner in from books.

Harvests, better far than golden  
Heaps of ever shifting store,  
Are the sheaves we reap from olden  
Fields of cultivated lore.

Little need of trivial story  
To beguile the hours away ;  
Heavy tomes—huge-clasped and hoary,  
Better suit than tinkling lay.

\* Southey.

See them, in proportions stately,  
Iron-clasped, and oaken-bound,  
As they, side by side, sedately  
Take their places near the ground ;

As if well they knew their station :  
And for all the ranks o'erhead,  
They afforded a foundation ;  
Sterling lustre furnished.

Farewell to out-door existence !  
Lo ! the ruddy flame ascends !  
What care I for change or distance,  
Now that I'm with changeless friends ?

So—with eyes half-closed and dreaming,  
Sit I in my study nook,  
Summoning to fancy's seeming,  
Scribe of many a pleasant book.

And the ancient chair before me  
Hath bright tenants to mine eyes ;  
Yet no shade of fear falls o'er me,  
All I feel is glad surprise !

CHAUCER—musical and merry,  
Makes me many a rugged rhyme,  
Telleth me of “ Canterbury,”  
And the “ Pilgrim ” of old time.

BACON—thoughtful, grave and solemn,  
Buildeth here again for me,  
A sublime, Heaven-reaching column,  
Of divine philosophy.

Graceful SIDNEY bids me listen  
Till in ecstasy I cry ;  
Whilst my eyes with rapture glisten—  
“ Am I, too, in Arcady ? ”

SPENSER, to majestic measure,  
And with soft angelic micn,  
Takes me to the realms of pleasure,  
Shows to me his “ Faerie Queene.”

Vanished like a fleeting vision !  
Lo ! another fills my chair ;  
Whilst a melody Elysian  
Fills the hushed and charmed air.

For, with face reflecting glory—  
With serene but sightless eyes ;  
MILTON sings the wond'rous story,  
Of the loss of Paradise !

Who is this, with sturdy feature,  
Lustrous eyes and garments quaint ?  
'Tis the limner of Man's nature,  
The historian of the Saint.

BUNYAN now repeats his story,  
How he penned from day to day ;  
(Prison-bound) his allegory  
Of the Pilgrim's heavenward way.

Cometh now, a gentle spirit ;  
Radiant is the smile it wears ;  
Though 'twas destined to inherit  
Here, a legacy of tears ;

Now no more by anguish riven,  
Now no more by madness bound ;  
COWPER whispers me of Heaven ;  
Of his long-lost mother, found.

POPE, sour-visaged, and sharp-featured  
Pries into my face, and sneers ;  
CHURCHILL, proud and bitter-natured  
Blends profanity with jeers.

Ha ! I hear of silks a rustling !  
Hooped and powdered—full in view  
Sits the witty, piquant, bustling  
Sprightly WORTLEY MONTAGUE !

And, tricked out—soft nothings muttering  
HORACE WALPOLE 's lingeringly,  
O'er each tasteful topic fluttering  
Like a learned butterfly !

But a glory now is shining  
All around my ancient chair ;  
Unseen fingers wreaths are twining,  
ROBERT BURNS is sitting there !

Now he speaks of " Highland Mary,"  
Now he sings of " Bonnie Jean ;"  
And, as aye his song doth vary,  
Fills, with fire, or tears, his " een."

BYRON, in unearthly brightness,  
Sits before me, face to face ;  
Like the marble in his whiteness :  
Like the Apollo in his grace ;

Now, subduing me with wonder  
At the pathos of his lyre ;  
Now, appalling with his thunder,—  
Now, half-scathing with his ire.

SCOTT, with pil'd-up brow, converses  
Of some raid or border-fray ;  
Or, with accurate glee, rehearses  
Stories of the olden day.

COLERIDGE,—there thou seem'st before me,  
As thou sat'st when I was young,  
And the silver showers fell o'er me,  
Rain'd down by thine eloquent tongue !

Keen-eyed HAZLITT, lo ! I greet thee !  
Though morose, thou'rt welcome here ;  
Poverty no more shall cheat thee  
With its destinies severe.

Thou, LAMB ! from the tomb new-risen,  
Playful, gentle " ELIA !" thou,  
From thy scarcely-daisyed prison,  
With the old smile upon thy brow !

Tell me some delicious fiction ;  
Fun or stutter—hoax or jest ;—  
No !—there is a GRAVE restriction ;—  
Rest, beloved ELIA, rest !

HEMANS, with her linked sweetness,  
LONDON, with her mournful song,  
Come and go with airy fleetness,  
Borne on viewless wings along.

Thus, with these and countless others,  
Draughts of pure delight I sip :  
Closer far than that of brothers  
Is our mute companionship !

And when each bright form hath vanished,  
Leaving desolate my room,  
Seemeth it as they had banished  
From my spirit half its gloom.

For I live in calm assurance,  
I, at last, with them shall learn  
What, too bright for their endurance,  
Earthly eyes may not discern.

Thus, with half-closed eyes and dreaming,  
Sit I in my study-nook,  
Summoning to fancy's seeming,  
Scribe of many a pleasant book.

And the ancient chair before me  
Hath bright tenants for my eyes,  
But no secret fear comes o'er me,  
All I fear is glad surprise.

“ Very pleasant society, too,” I remarked, as  
I laid down the manuscript.

“ But I not only have the company of authors—  
even artists step from the frames on the wall.”

The room was adorned by many beautiful  
sketches by eminent painters, chiefly presents to  
M——.

“By the way,” he added, “did you ever read those clever lines of Macnish, the modern Pythagorean, as he called himself, in which he hits off in a single verse the peculiarities of our chief poets, giving a verse to each?”

“They were published in ‘Blackwood,’ were they not?”

“Just so.—Well, I have been trying my hand at a rhyming catalogue of painters. Here are my

#### “PENCILLINGS OF PAINTERS.”

##### MARTIN.

With bold and nervous hand  
Time’s veil asunder riven,  
He bids before us stand  
The scenes of hell and heaven.

##### TURNER.

With pencil dipped in light,  
He paints, while all applaud;  
And well deserves to bear  
The name of England’s Claude.

##### COLLINS.

Beside the cottage door  
The country children play,  
While evening sunshine flings  
O’er earth its mellow ray.



## CONSTABLE.

The mill-stream or the lane,  
He loved to picture forth;  
And English Landscape well  
Attests the artist's worth.

## STANFIELD.

His graceful barks sweep on,  
Beneath a smiling sun,  
Or shadowed o'er by storm,  
The doomed ship hurries on.

## MORLAND.

The meanest things around  
His pencil brought to view;  
And Truth declares her own  
Whatever Morland drew.

## FUSELI.

All dark and monstrous shapes  
He brings before our eyes;  
And crowds his canvass page  
With hideous fantasies.

## WILKIE.

That genius may depict  
The household feelings well:  
Let the "Blind Fiddler" teach,  
Or Wilkie's "Rent Day" tell.

## CRUIKSHANK.

With his instructive hues,  
He gladdens wit or sage,  
And well may be declared  
The Hogarth of his age.

## DANIELLS.

Far scenes he loved to paint,  
Scenes from that Eastern land,  
Where, 'neath unclouded skies,  
The idol-temples stand.

## VON HOLST.

He paints the passions well !  
See where the murderess\* lies,  
Remorse within her breast,  
And madness in her eyes.

## LANDSEER.

Life on his canvass glows—  
The Highland stag bounds on—  
We touch the crouching hare,  
And wonder 'tis not gone !

## WEBSTER.

Unrivalled limner thou  
Of youth—its cares—its joys—

\* Death of Lady Macbeth.

Let who will sketch the MEN,  
So Webster "Do-the-Boys."

## COPLEY FIELDING.

Painter for gentle hearts !  
He loves the quiet scene ;  
And charms us with the sight  
Of Landscapes cool and green.

## PICKERSGILL.

Daguerreotype shall wage  
With Painters useless strife,  
While Pickersgill endues  
The canvass almost with life.

## ETTY.

Resplendent "Titian," when  
Thy latest work was wrought,  
Thy father's mantle, sure  
The brilliant Etty caught.

## RIPPINGILLE.

The drunkard's sad career,  
From happiness to ill,  
Or Italy's warm sons,  
Who paints like Rippingille ?

## DANBY.

Enchantment's artist ! o'er  
Thy scenes, our senses rest ;

And see, before us, gleam  
The islands of the blest.

## ROBERTS.

His pencil finely draws  
The high, o'er-arching dome,  
Or the vast, columned piles  
Of old majestic Rome.

## MACLISE.

With equal grace he paints  
Or sad, or tragic scene ;  
Well he deserves a wreath,  
Who gave us "Halloween."

## LOVER.

Painter and poet, too,  
I must not pass thee o'er ;  
A master of two arts,  
For what I know o' MORE.

"And now, D——," he said, "here is a bundle of manuscripts, chiefly relating to my literary history. Among them you will find personal recollections of some of the most noticeable literary people whom I have fallen in with here, and in America. There are also a few reminiscences of transatlantic scenes which may amuse a stay-at-home fellow like yourself. The sketches are at

least faithful, if they possess no high literary merit."

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The substance of the manuscripts committed to my charge by M—— will be found in the following pages. They have been but slightly altered. In some instances, however, where blanks occurred, I have, from notes made immediately after my numerous interviews with him, supplied the deficiencies; but in no instance have I interfered with the staple matter of his articles.

THE EDITOR.

## CHAPTER II.

## REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

BUT very few years have elapsed since the venerable Bard of "The Excursion," when referring to the deaths of several of his great contemporaries, exclaimed :—

"How fast has brother followed brother,  
From sunshine to the Sunless Land."

To that "Sunless Land" he has himself departed, his day of life having closed far more serenely than had those of several of the poets he so pathetically deplored. He had witnessed the worse than death of his early friend, and the friend, too, of his later years, Robert Southey. He had beheld the extinguishment of his great mind by insanity; whilst, at a more advanced age, his own was preserved unruffled and undimmed. Coleridge had passed away, after a life of dreaminess rather than

of action. Scott had sunk into the grave with crippled powers of mind, and a body shattered by paralysis ; and Byron, having blazed like a comet, disappeared almost as strangely and suddenly. Wordsworth seemed to stand the last of that band of poets, whose fame, at one time, was universal ; when it was announced that he, too, had ceased to dwell among the living, all felt that almost the *last* star, which shone in the glorious galaxy that had illuminated the literary firmament during the last forty years, was now extinguished in the darkness of the tomb.

Familiar as I had been with the personal appearance of most of the great authors of the age, I had never been so fortunate as to encounter Wordsworth "face to face" before the year 1841. With him, as a Poet, I had been familiar from childhood ; for I well remember, that the story of "The Pet Lamb" was, in my early school-days, one of my prime favourites, as indeed, I am not ashamed to admit, that it is even at present. I had walked and talked with Crabbe ;—had seen and conversed with Southey ;—and had associated with James Montgomery. But as yet, the future laureate was a stranger to me, in so far as his flesh and blood appearance was concerned. Of course, whilst perusing his pages, I frequently experienced an intense desire to look upon him who had afforded me so much delight ; and, how, at length,

that desire was suddenly and unexpectedly gratified, I shall now proceed to detail.

Just about ten years since I was "located," as our Yankee friends have it, in the little town of M——, in South Wales, where I alternately was employed as the editor of a country newspaper, or as a salmon fisher; for the beautiful river Wye flowed close to the town, and afforded abundant opportunities to the lovers of the "gentle art," of indulging in their piscatory propensities. It not unfrequently happened that, when wearied with "whipping the water," I sought for some green nook by the side of the romantic river, and that, "the world shut out," indulged in some pleasant day-dream during the slumberous summer afternoon, or employed myself in building castles in the air, and in peopling them according to the dictates or caprices of my fancy. More frequently I drew from one of the many pockets of my fishing jacket some choice volume, and casting for the time all thoughts of politics to the winds, and sending the cares of the newspaper to another quarter, luxuriated amid the pages of some great son of song. On which occasions a mead, in the neighbourhood of M——, was a favourite resort of mine, as it had been of the immortal author of the "Elegy in a Country Church-yard,"—Thomas Gray, who designated C——n mead as "the delight of my eyes, and the very seat of pleasure." Hallowed by



such a poetical association, is it to be wondered at that I spent in that locality many a pleasant hour, when stern business permitted me so to do? Here I read Wordsworth over and over again, and with none the less zest that the poet himself had been a delighted stroller on the banks of the Wye which encircled the meadow. Little, on such occasions did I imagine that at no distant period I should stand beside him, where, as Pope says—

“Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds;”

but so it chanced to be.

My first view of Wordsworth was obtained under rather singular circumstances; and as the adventure which enabled me to gratify my curiosity, trifling though it was, proved that where there is a will there is always a way, I shall make no apology for introducing it.

Everybody knows that the tour of the river Wye, from its source to Chepstow Castle, is a favourite one. During the summer months nothing can be more delightful than a trip on this lovely stream; and, consequently, there are frequent arrivals of distinguished people, at the various towns on its banks. M—— was one of the stopping places; and so, it was by no means a rare thing for the eyes of its inhabitants to be gratified by the sight of people, whose fame had travelled

to them through the medium of newspapers. On the occasion of any such arrivals, the doors of the inns, where the illustrious strangers might be staying, were besieged by gazers. But the great attractions for the good folks of M—— were lords, or ladies, or perhaps a popular member of the House of Commons. For my own part I cared little about these ; but I confess to having, on one occasion, joined the idlers, in order to catch a glimpse of the author of “ Pelham ;” and this reminds me that I must not longer delay the account of my Wordsworthian adventure.

At this time, the head waiter at the principal hotel in M——, was quite a “ character ;” and every one who has had occasion to patronise the “ Beaufort Arms” will agree with me in describing him as such. A great man in his own opinion, although little in stature, he liked nothing so much as gazing on great people of any sort ; and I verily believe, that when he “ waited” on any of the *elite*, at the hotel, he imagined that he caught from them a reflected glory. It was a positive gratification, too, for him to run over to my editorial *sanctum*, with a list for publication in the paper, of the arrivals : and to these propensities of John C—— was I indebted for my first glimpse of William Wordsworth.

I was, one morning, quietly seated in my snug room, busily engaged in my vocation—the scissors

and paste at hand—a heap of correspondence lying unopened before me—dozens of exchange newspapers littering the table, chairs, and floor,—and a parcel of books and magazines of the month were quietly awaiting review, when a well-known rap at my door elicited the usual “Come in!” In a second afterwards, the spruce form of the head-waiter insinuated itself into the room. I saw that something rare was “in the wind,” for the little man’s face was actually radiant with delight.

“Well, John,” I said, interrogatively, and rather listlessly; for I had been so often disturbed by the head-waiter, on the arrival of some “illustrious obscure,” that I did not feel much curiosity as to the object of his visit.

“Ah, sir,” said John, rubbing his hands as if he was washing them

“With invisible soap  
In imperceptible water;”

“you *will* be pleased *this* time, I know, for you write verses yourself, sometimes.”

“And what may that have to do with the matter?” I inquired.

“Who d’ye think has just come in? try and guess,” said John, with an air of great mystification.

Of course, I could not guess; so, after evidently

attempting to excite my curiosity to the utmost, the head-waiter put his mouth very close to my ear and announced that—

“A real great poet, not one like —— (and he mentioned the name of an occasional contributor to the B——), but a *regular one, who followed it as a trade.*”

I could not help smiling at this rather unpoetical definition of a son of Apollo's high vocation, and inquired who the extraordinary stranger might be!

“A great favourite of yours, I know; for I heard you give some of his poetry when you made a speech at the M—— Literary Society dinner, not long ago.”

My curiosity was now excited, and having made further inquiries, I learned that an hour before, an elderly gentleman had arrived, by boat, from Ross, and was now awaiting his dinner at the Beaufort Arms. A peep into the Visitors' book, had informed the head-waiter that the visitor was no other than Mr. Wordsworth.

I was no longer indifferent. Away flew the pen and the scissors after it. A whole batch of letters “to the editor” were flung into the Balaam-basket; and starting from my chair, I seized John C—— by the hand, and inquired how I could get a good view of the great man, without being intrusive or impertinent.

“Ah! that's what I was thinking of,” replied

John. "The gentleman has taken a private room, in which he will dine. If it was a coffee-room dinner, it could be managed easily enough."

"John," said I, after a pause, "who will wait upon him at dinner?"

John gave me a look in reply, which, plainly as words, said, "Who but I?" I felt as though I had wounded his feelings.

"Then," I suggested, "I'll act as your assistant, and pay Tom, your 'sub,' a crown for the privilege. What say you?"

And it was agreed that, for that day only, I should drop the editorial "we," and don the garb of a waiter. That transformation was speedily effected; and having received a few lessons from my superior in office, I was introduced to the private room, where I busied myself in going through the usual routine of the sideboard.

As yet the poet had not emerged from the chamber whither he had retired on arriving at the hotel; but on the dinner being announced, steps were heard approaching, a door opened, and a gentleman made his appearance.

It needed but a glance to inform me who that individual was, for I was familiar enough with the best published portraits of Wordsworth. The great Lake Poet was before me, little dreaming that one of his most ardent admirers was at that moment far more intent on perusing his features

than on polishing the plate from which he was to dine. I must admit that I felt somewhat nervous; but this was scarcely to be wondered at, when the novelty of my position is taken into consideration; and I fear I surveyed Mr. Wordsworth rather more curiously than a well-bred waiter should do; for I received a significant wink from my companion, which rendered me rather more attentive to my duty.

But let me describe the personal appearance of William Wordsworth, as I beheld him. Perhaps the dinner table is not the most advantageous place in the world at which to sketch literary men; unless, indeed, they are of the Theodore Hooke sort, who shine most brilliantly when

“The bottle—the sun of the table,  
And its beams—the rosy wine,”

circulates, and shed their influence. “No man,” says somebody, “is a hero to his *valet de chambre*,” and, by a similar rule, no poet is great to his waiter. In my case, however, the fact that the author of some of the finest sonnets in the English language seemed mightily to enjoy some genuine English roast beef, did not at all diminish my reverence for his genius.

Wordsworth was what may be called a tall man; his frame was strongly made, and in his

prime I should imagine he must have possessed great physical vigour. The shoulders were broad, the chest ample, and the lower limbs muscular and well developed. The head, however, that storehouse of mind, was the chief attraction; it was finely if not proudly formed; the forehead high, capacious, and almost bare at its summit, was one which could only have belonged to a professor of all the elevated mental faculties; a few waving locks of tawny-coloured hair floated lightly across it, from the temples. At the base of this frontal region was a pair of large grey, melancholy-looking eyes, shaded by rather bushy brows. The expression of these "windows of the soul," was that of deep contemplativeness, and they gave their character in a great degree to the entire countenance—a contemplativeness blent with sadness, the latter being imparted by the mouth, the angles of which had a downward tendency. The nose was long and large, and the cheeks sallow and sunken. The chin appeared long, and the shape of the entire countenance resembled an oval, the upper part of which was unusually broad. The prevailing expression of the whole was, as I have said, that of sadness.

With reference to this "sad" expression of Wordsworth's, I may mention here that Mrs. Sigourney, the well-known American poetess, informed me some years afterwards, when I visited

her at her pleasant residence, at Hartford, Connecticut, that she also was struck by this peculiarity of the poet's combined features. "I took tea with him," remarked the lady, "at Rydal Mount, and as he sat at a little table by the fire-side, apart from his family, sipping his souchong, I thought I never saw so sad-looking a countenance. This was most evident in repose; but even when his features seemed lighted up in the course of conversation, the mournful impression did not wholly pass away."

The attire of the poet was simple enough—plain black: his shirt was adorned with a frill at the breast, the only thing approaching to ornament about him, and his neck was enveloped with a white neck-cloth. He looked, in fact, more like a grave country clergyman, than anything else to which I can compare him.

Of course, as he dined *solus*, I had no opportunity of hearing his conversation; indeed I do not think he opened his lips half a dozen times during dinner, like a sensible man as he was. As soon as he completed his meal, he drew his arm-chair to the fire, threw a handkerchief over his poetical head, and fell into a dose. Certain nasal sounds soon announced that he was most unpoetically and unmistakeably asleep; for—tell it not in the "Row"—whisper it not in the Halls of Song—Wordsworth snored!



From M—— the poet proceeded, that afternoon, on a visit to Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, Bart., at Goodrich Court, but a few miles distant; and I having resigned my “napkin,”-resumed the Editorial chair. I was destined, however, to have other and better opportunities of seeing the poet; and one occurred but a few days after the occurrence just described.

Who has not visited, or at least heard of, the beautiful ruins of Tintern Abbey? In the immediate neighbourhood of this desolated religious house of the Cistercian monks, at the period to which I have been referring, resided, at that time, one of the cleverest and most remarkable young men I ever knew. T—— was a surgeon, and had been my fellow-student. After scampering half the world over, he had married comfortably, and settled down as a general practitioner at Tintern. It was my custom, every Saturday after the newspaper was “out,” to walk the nine miles which intervened between M—— and his residence, and in his and his wife’s society to spend the few leisure hours which my occupation afforded me.

On the Saturday morning, the day of my “amateur” performance of waiter, I found myself, as usual, at T——’s cottage; and after dinner, as we were enjoying a cigar in the steep garden

which divided us from the road, a post-chaise rattled by, and in it I recognised Wordsworth.

Now my friend T——, like myself, was a bit of a literary lion hunter; and when I informed him who the stranger was,—and when, moreover, we observed the vehicle stop at the inn near the abbey, and Mr. Wordsworth alight, and proceed towards the latter, he determined to proceed thither himself, also, and to introduce himself to the poet.

“You had better not,” I remarked; “Wordsworth, I have heard, is by no means an accessible or affable sort of man, and you may meet with a cold reception.”

“He cannot well be rude to a brother author, however humble he may be,” said T——. “I’ll present him with a copy of my ‘Guide,’ by way of a letter of introduction.”

I should here mention that T—— had written about the very best topographical work of its kind I have ever seen—a little manual description of Tintern and its vicinity; “Blackwood” himself has justified my praise of it.

Arming himself with one of these, he sallied forth, I following, and we soon reached the ruin.

Immediately, on entering it, we observed Wordsworth: he was standing on the summit of one of the walls, high over our heads, and apparently sur-

veying, with profound interest, the scenery which was spread beneath and around.

“Just the place to meet a poet,” said my impetuous friend ; and before I could dissuade him, he was clambering like a monkey up a part of the ruin, whither I should as soon think of flying as following him. But there was not a foot of the old abbey which was not familiar to him, and he reached the summit in safety.

I chose to ascend by the less perilous process of mounting one of the winding staircases ; and, when I arrived at the top, to my surprise my friend T—— and Wordsworth were apparently as familiarly chatting as if they had known each other for years. The poet had T——’s guide-book open in his hand, and my friend was explaining some part of it.

I joined them. Fortunately, Mr. Wordsworth did not in me recognise the waiter of a few days before ; indeed, it was not probable that he would do so.

T—— coolly introduced me as his friend, and gradually we fell, as we sat on the mouldering wall, into a most agreeable conversation.

There could scarcely be conceived a greater contrast than the lively rattling talk of my friend, and the almost sermonising manner and tones of Wordsworth. The latter appeared at times to be quite absorbed in reverie, and he in a measure

accounted for this, by informing us that his then visit to Tintern brought vividly to his remembrances many a scene and friend departed. After a silence of some minutes, I was not a little gratified to hear the poet repeating poetry—his own too. They were the lines on revisiting those very scenes which we were then surveying, and which are to be found in his works. Wordsworth seemed to *chaunt* his verse; his voice was deep, and not unmusical, but I must say, that I have heard hundreds recite his poetry far better than did its author. Doubtless he felt it, despite the monotony, and doubtless also, my friend himself enjoyed it. It was no slight treat to hear the bard of Rydal repeating his own high “utterances” at such a time, and in such a scene.

After about half an hour’s communion, both T—— and myself felt that it would not be desirable to further intrude on the privacy of the poet, and bidding the venerable man a respectful farewell, we left him, not a little gratified with our interview. In nine or ten days afterwards, the gift of T——’s “Guide,” was reciprocated by a copy of Wordsworth’s poems, whose value was enhanced by the autograph of their author.

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Wordsworth has often been charged with a want of courtesy towards those who, from motives of curiosity, visited him at his residence by the lakes. There may be some truth in this; but it must be remembered that he was sorely pestered by people from all quarters, who went to gaze at him as they would have gazed at a wild beast. I was once present at a party in the city of Boston, United States, when a young gentleman who had just returned from an European tour, declared that he had been even rudely treated by the poet. A gentleman, however, who chanced to be present, told an anecdote of Wordsworth, which goes far to prove that the statements as to his lack of politeness are unfounded; and with this reminiscence, I shall conclude my sketch of the late laureate.

It appeared that the gentleman in question, whilst travelling in Westmoreland, felt a strong desire to see England's greatest living poet, but being unprovided with any letter of introduction, felt somewhat at a loss how to accomplish his purpose. Chance, however, favoured him. When in the immediate neighbourhood of Rydal Mount, he met a peasant, of whom he inquired where Mr. Wordsworth the poet lived. The fellow stared, and said, "He know'd nobody of that trade thereabouts,—but there was a gen'lman of the name of Wordsworth, and he was with the haymakers in the field yonder." The American looked in the

direction indicated by the countryman's finger, and saw amongst the haymakers, a tall man with a broad brimmed hat on and a light summer coat, raking away vigorously. It was the poet, who, on the stranger introducing himself, cordially welcomed him, and insisted on his accompanying him to his house, "where," my informant added, "I spent one of the most delightful days I ever remember to have enjoyed."

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Memory has its pains as well as its pleasures, although the former have not had a Rogers to sing of, and immortalise them. But a few years have elapsed since Wordsworth, T——, and myself sat side by side in the ruined Abbey of Tintern. The friend of my youth no longer lingers on the banks of the Wye, and his cheerful voice no longer echos joyously in my ear; whilst the "dew of youth" rested on his brows, he sank on a bed of sickness, from whence he never rose, save in the spirit! Wordsworth, too, is no more.—The young enthusiast and the aged poet alike "sleep the sleep that knows no waking." Why the writer of this frail record should have been spared to pen it, is amongst those things which, till Death shall rend the veil, must remain impenetrable mysteries!

## CHAPTER III.

## A VISIT TO MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

SOME few years since I chanced to visit the pretty little town of Reading, and happening one fine morning to have, (no uncommon an occurrence in country towns,) some time which I was anxious to get rid of in the speediest possible way, I strolled through the streets of the place in search of amusement—not adventures; for in so quiet a place as the county town of Berkshire, it was by no means possible that I should encounter anything savouring of the romantic.

The tour of the various streets was soon made; and as it yet wanted a full hour to dinner time, I sauntered into a linen-draper's shop, having suddenly remembered that I required a pair of gloves, a want which it is by no means unlikely was forced on my recollection by the fact, that a remarkably pretty young female was stationed behind

the counter. Be that as it may, I entered the shop, and while engaged in selecting a pair of kids (I tried a great many pairs before I was suited,) and in chattering "soft sawder" to the damsel aforesaid, a lady in a dowdy-looking bonnet entered the "Emporium," and in the most business-like manner imaginable, proceeded to inspect rolls of flannel, bundles of tape, and balls of cotton. I noticed that there was in the stranger's manner a something peculiar—an air which might not have been expected to belong to one so plainly attired ; nevertheless, as soon as this lady had completed her purchases, and left the shop, I was about to follow her example, careless of inquiring who she was, when the young lady to whom I had, whilst talking, said something about poetry, surprised me by stating that the just departed customer was no other than the "celebrated authoress—Miss Mitford."

I ran to the door to catch another and a more distinct view of the well known (by name) writer, but to my mortification could see nothing but the "dowdy bonnet," and a little pony-chaise in which was seated a silver-haired old gentleman ; in a moment afterwards, the lady took the reins, whipped the pony, or rather flourished the whip over its back, and away rattled the vehicle. I was not a little vexed at my having missed so good an opportunity of seeing the countenance of Miss Mit-



ford ; but then I could not well blame myself for lack of penetration ; for, who in the name of all that is poetical would have imagined the authoress of “Rienzi,” standing before a draper’s counter fingering patterns of flannel, and in the most prosaic manner imaginable, actually bargaining for bobbin ?

Though, however, I lost one opportunity of gratifying my *penchant* for noticing “noticeable people,” I was not in the long run a loser ; for, as the reader will presently learn, another and better chance was unexpectedly afforded me.

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Scarcely one fair eye will rest upon this reminiscence, which has not, in days past, brightened with pleasure, when a new tale, by Mary Russell Mitford, has been announced ; for who has not rejoiced in the company of her charming village girls—her smart, hale young bumpkins—or been delighted with her picture of English Life, in its happiest and most genial aspects ? As a dramatist, too, she has been eminently successful ; and, so long ago as the year eighteen-hundred and twenty-three, she produced her strikingly effective tragedy of “Julian,” which was dedicated to Mr. William Macready ; for, as she said, “the zeal with which he befriended the production of a stranger, for the

judicious alterations which he suggested, and for the energy, the pathos, and the skill, with which he more than embodied the principal character."

In the year following the appearance of "Julian," Miss Mitford sent to the press the first of that series of works on which her great reputation will rest. The fifth and last volume of the series, entitled, "Our Village, Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery," appeared in 1832. The circumscribed limits of a village could not, however, satisfy Miss Mitford's ambition; and so she wrote the interesting volume of descriptions, entitled, "Belford Regis—or, Sketches in a Country Town." Not satisfied with this extension of her literary railroad, she gleaned, from the *New World*, three volumes of stories of American life, by American writers—in introducing which to an English public, she says:—"The scenes described and the personages introduced are as various as the authors, extending, in geographical space, from Canada to Mexico, and including almost every degree of civilization, from the wild Indian and the almost equally wild hunter of the forest and prairies, to the cultivated inhabitant of the city and the plain." I must not omit, whilst cataloguing Miss Mitford's productions, to mention "*Rienzi*," a tragedy, which has been pronounced, by competent judges, to be little inferior to Miss Joanna Baillie's best plays. Besides all these, Miss Mitford has written

innumerable tales and poems for the magazines and annuals, which prove that her industry is quite equal to her talents. A circumstance of rather seldom occurrence in literary life, as is proved by a recent advertisement in the "Times," in which an appeal to the charity of the public is made in behalf of the widow of the late Mr. —, who was one of the most accomplished and versatile men I ever knew, but who, unfortunately, would not *work* the mine of talent which he possessed, and which might, and ought to have yielded a fund for the support of his widow and children, who are now crying for bread, whilst young ladies are singing his songs in splendid drawing-rooms.

It is, however, to Miss Mitford's English Tales that she must chiefly trust for her fame with those to follow after us. There is so much unaffected grace, tenderness and beauty, in these rural delineations, that I cannot conceive their ever being considered obsolete or uninteresting. In them she has treasured, not only the results of long and familiar observation, but the feelings and conceptions of a truly poetical mind. When her sketches were first written, Miss Mitford, as all young authors and authoresses do, sent them, in detached portions, to various magazines. To her infinite mortification, periodical after periodical, including *all* the important ones, rejected them, and at last they only found refuge in an obscure and ill-edited lady's

magazine. We all of us know what repositories of trash most of these ladies' monthly journals are, even in our own day, and may, therefore, readily conceive that some twenty years since, they must have been indeed last refuges for the destitute. But the sterling merit which Miss Mitford's articles possessed, soon attracted attention, and the experiment of collecting them into a volume was tried. The style was so graphic, racy and fresh, that the public began to relish it; and the result was that these sketches became more popular than the authoress's works of a higher class. Hundreds of imitators sprung up, and ere long an obscure Berkshire hamlet became a place to which literary pilgrims resorted. Amongst these pilgrims I may be numbered; and now I think I may as well give an account of my pilgrimage—the shrine, and the (for the time) saint.

The reader will remember how, in the linen-draper's shop, I saw the lady, in a common black bonnet; and how, when I learned that it was Miss Mitford, I had been disappointed in not having caught a glimpse of her face. I happened, on the evening of that very day, to mention to a lady of Reading, at whose house I was taking tea, my disappointment, when she said gaily—

“Oh, if you have such a desire to see the lady, you may easily do so by paying her a visit.”

“Yes,” said I, “but I have no letter of intro-

duction, and I could not, of course, think of intruding on her privacy; for if there be one thing I hate more than another, it is the habit some people have of poking their intrusive poles into literary cages, for the purpose of stirring up the lions, and hearing them roar."

"Well," rejoined my friend, "there will be no need of troubling yourself about that. I know Miss Mitford well enough to take a friend to visit her. She is the simplest creature imaginable, and if you will drive me over to-morrow, I'll introduce you to her."

So the bargain was made, and for the sake of seeing the authoress of "Our Village," I put off until that indefinite time, "another day," my journey to London.

Fortunately, the next morning was a lovely one; and having secured a vehicle, Mrs. ——— and myself left Reading, and after a delightful drive, arrived at the place of our destination.

"Here we are, at Three Mile Cross, and there is Miss Mitford's residence," said my friend; "but we had better get down at the Inn, and walk over to her place; it will look less ceremonious, and we shall feel more at ease." So we handed over our Bucephalus to a scrubby-looking ostler, and walked towards our place of destination.

Three Mile Cross consists of a few detached cottages, on the great road leading from London

through Basingstoke, and in one of these cottages resides Miss Mitford. A stranger might pass them by without scarcely noticing them; but he who had read Miss Mitford's works, as I had done, could not fail to recognise in them the originals of some of her famous descriptions. As I looked about, with inquisitive eyes, I could not help expecting, every moment, that some bright-eyed "Patty" would open a window, and indulge me with a sight of her neatly attired form; or that some smart young village bachelor, with a gay bouquet in his button-hole, would make his appearance beneath the said window, for the purpose of saying sweet and soft things to the pretty Patty. The very gardens, I fancied, had been laid out, and the cottages built after the plans set down in "Our Village." Not a rustic went by me but I instantly marked him down as a "character," and the very horses, so they seemed to me, were very well known "Dobins," and "Boxers," and "Ventures," who had drawn waggon loads of hay at certain harvest homes I had read of, which loads had been augmented by the light burdens of bevvies of hay-makeresses, and the heavier weights of able-bodied young farmers, all tricked out in gay ribbons, and full of cider and conviviality.

And no wonder was it, that my eye seemed familiar with every place which it fell upon, for now-a-days every one knows "Our Village," and

is aware that the nooks and corners, the haunts, and the copses, so delightfully described in its pages, will be found in the immediate neighbourhood of Three Mile Cross. Miss Mitford draws, principally, from home-scenes, and it is surprising how wonderfully true to nature are her delineations.

As may be supposed, I looked with no little interest at the cottage within whose walls was, most probably, at that very moment, the lady whom I so desired to see. It was a plain one-story edifice, with a pretty porch, over the lattice-work of which roses, jasmine, and woodbine clambered, and a neat garden at its front and back. We went boldly up to the door, rung the bell, and on my friend's asking if Miss Mitford was at home and disengaged—a voice, from one side of the entrance passage, was heard, saying—

“ Yes,—I'm in here, Mrs. —, walk in.”

“ I have a gentleman with me,” said my friend, as she nudged my arm with her elbow; “ may I bring him in with me ?”

“ Oh, by all means,” said Miss Mitford—for it was her coming forward to the door—and I, having been introduced, and made my very best bow, I walked into the little parlour, where the lady resumed the very characteristic employment in which our coming had, for a moment, interrupted her—that of tying to a large painted green frame,

the boughs of a very large and very refractory geranium.

"Isn't it a beauty?" asked she of my friend; and Mrs. —, with quite a floral enthusiasm, declared that it was, and furthermore added, that, for her part, she had never seen such another, and never expected to, and begged for a slip. For want of something to say, I chimed in with the laudations of this monstrous geranium, although I candidly confess that I am no great admirer of this much-cultivated plant. As soon as a broken sprig or two, and a few dead leaves had been removed, a servant was summoned, who took it away, and then Miss Mitford, after having apologised for her occupation, sat down near me, and gave me a good opportunity of observing her.

When we use the term "Miss," we are apt to associate it with youth and beauty—silk gowns and sensibility—frocks and flirtations; somehow or another, we never suppose a "Miss" to be out of her teens; and although I was previously well assured of the fact that Miss Mitford was, as the smart little linen-draper said, "old maidish," I certainly was not prepared to see a lady, with hair white, almost, as the driven snow, and who numbered more years than go to make up half a century. So brisk and lively had all her descriptions been, that I had been apt to think of her as a lively lady, who had romped with those of whom she wrote so



pleasantly and so well. Alas! how time steals upon us! A calmer reflection assured me that many years had passed over my own head since I first read her story, and there, before me, sat the lady herself, to prove that whilst she had been writing, Time had been busy—even her delightful stories could not stay the inexorable old spoiler's flight.

She had a round, plump, full, *almost* a chubby, face; over a well-shaped (more broad than high) forehead, her white hair was parted, and confined, at the sides, beneath a plain, and, to my mind, very ugly morning cap—(I hate caps, unless they are very natty, and set jauntily over a very arch face). Her eyes were of a light grey colour, and very vivacious in their expression. A close observer might have detected, round the outer edge of the iris, a fine black line, which gave a sort of arch expression to her optics. Her nose was short and thick; on either side of it was a plump pair of cheeks, and beneath it one of the most good humoured mouths in the world, and a double chin. Miss Mitford's face was, in expression, what the Scotch would term "sonsie," but I may be better understood when I say that it was eminently characteristic of English good humour. You could look at such a set of features and fancy that they never could be distorted by ill-humour or bad temper; and, at times, the grey eyes assumed a fine, thoughtful

expression, and the whole of the features beamed with intellectual energy. It was not a common face, by any means; but, at the same time, had you met with it in a crowd, it would not have greatly attracted you. Knowing, however, to whom it belonged, I surveyed it with great pleasure. Miss Mitford's figure was neither tall, nor short, but between the two, and rather inclined to *en bon point*. So, having said thus much, I leave the reader to imagine a cheerful room, adorned with prints and paintings, the windows of which looked into a flower garden, at the back of the house, and through whose casements came in the most delicious odours, and that in this cheerful apartment are seated two ladies and myself, and they have as correct an idea of the scene, as I, at least, can give them.

Miss Mitford, it seemed, was acquainted with some friends of mine at Clifton, and so we soon fell into cheerful and lively conversation. All, or nearly all her characters, she said, she had drawn from life, and she named many of the inhabitants of Reading, whom she had introduced in her story of Belford Regis. But neither time nor space will allow of my lengthening out this sketch, by relating all that was said during the two pleasant hours which I spent in her society that morning. After we had been some time in the parlour, she took us into her garden, and there introduced us

to her father, a venerable old gentleman, to whom she appeared most devotedly attached. He seemed to be in ill-health, and was walking with feeble steps up and down a pathway, bordered with box, and fragrant with wallflowers, and clove pinks. Miss Mitford very specially commended her geraniums to our admiration, and certainly she had a fine collection for pets ; but as I said, I cared little for them, and would rather have a simple daisy or violet, than all the finely-named favourites of that class which ever bloomed.

Some currant wine and cake, mixed with some delightful talking, "concluded the morning's entertainment," and bidding "Three Mile Cross" and its amiable lioness adieu, we returned to Reading, where I amused myself, during the remainder of the day, in hunting up the originals of Miss Mitford's "Belford Regis" characters, and finished by a chat with Stephen Lane, a character whom every one who has read that charming work must remember.

Since the above was written, Miss Mitford's venerable father has passed away, and I believe the lady herself has quitted "Three Mile Cross." I am not aware that she has published anything within the last three or four years ; but it is to be hoped that her numerous works have rendered it unnecessary, after so long and successful a literary career, that she should depend for her daily bread upon the precarious aid of the pen.

## CHAPTER IV.

A LITERARY BREAKFAST AT DWARKANAUTH TAGORE'S,  
WITH MACAULAY, D'ISRAELI, SIR HENRY ELLIS,  
AND JOHN BRITTON.

IN the month of November, 1845, a week or two after my arrival from America, Dr. —, with whom I had been discussing a quiet chop at the Athenæum, looked up from the "Globe" newspaper, and asked me if I had yet seen the then fresh "lion" of London.

"Who might he be?" I inquired, somewhat carelessly, for I had gazed on so many wonders during my late tour, that my appetite for anything "new and strange" was, just then, none of the sharpest.

"The Baboo, Dwarkanauth Tagore," replied my friend,

"Oh!" said I, "the rich East Indian, about

whom the women are making such a fuss just now, because he gives them the most superb shawls in the world."

"The same," rejoined Dr. —; "and if you would like to see him 'at home,' I am to breakfast with him next Sunday morning, and am intimate enough with him to introduce a friend. Some literary people will be sure to be there too, for he likes to have such about him. Will you accompany me?"

"Willingly," said I, "but first let me know something about this Oriental Cræsus."

"He is, then," said my friend, "as his name will have suggested to you, an East Indian. His wealth is so enormous, that it is scarcely any exaggeration to say that he is the richest man in the world. A few years ago, when a panic occurred amongst the commercial houses in Calcutta, especially, and the great Indian seats of commerce generally, Dwarkanauth came forward and advertised that he would furnish them with any amount they might in the emergency require. His name was such a tower of strength, that the mere announcement caused a suspension of the panic. At another time he entered a room in Calcutta, where the merchants were assembled to deliberate on the best means of raising £50,000, to build a new town hall. 'Gentlemen,' said Dwarkanauth, 'I will buy the premises of which

you are speaking, build a town hall on its site, and present it to the city.' This he did, and was no loser by it either, for his property in the neighbourhood greatly increased in value. His possessions are immense, and he owns the only coal mine, a very valuable one, which is to be found in India. He was in this country three years ago, and is now here travelling for the benefit of his health. His nephew and youngest son accompany him. The Governor-General of India is Dwarkanauth's guest, at one of his country seats, every year; and it may give some idea of the Oriental munificence of this holiday resort of the governor, when I tell you that one wing of it will afford accommodation to one hundred and sixty guests, with their servants, which, in India, is always a pretty considerable number. Tagore, when he came to England, brought, as presents to the queen and the nobility, shawls to the value of many thousand pounds. He is a frequent guest at the table of her majesty, who presented him with a splendidly mounted portrait of herself. You have doubtless heard of Rammohun Roy. It was Dwarkanauth Tagore who patronised him, and furnished him with the means of visiting England. In Calcutta, Dwarkanauth is principal of the chief banks; he has the largest number of shares in the Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and travels in his own steam-ships. He is an Unitarian in

creed, as was Rammohun Roy. I assure you that I have not in the slightest degree exaggerated respecting his enormous wealth, but have rather understated the matter. He is living at the St. George's Hotel, Albemarle Street, at the rate of £10,000 a-year—this I know to be a fact."

Who could resist the opportunity of visiting such a magnificent individual? I accordingly gladly accepted my friend's kind offer, and the more willingly as he had intimated that I should also have the opportunity of meeting certain literary men whom I had a great desire to see.

Accordingly, as the clock of Saint Martin in-the-Fields struck ten, on the following Sunday morning, Dr. — and myself strolled along Pall Mall, and up St. James's Street, and after crossing Piccadilly, entered quiet Albemarle Street.

On our arriving at the St. George's Hotel, we were ushered into the drawing-room of Dwarkanauth, who had a magnificent suite of apartments there, which was furnished in costly style, and hung round with valuable paintings, which he had purchased since his arrival, for he was a munificent patron of art. His private secretary received us; and, before our host made his appearance, we amused ourselves by looking over the treasures of art which lay scattered around. Every now and then a turbaned Asiatic, habited in a closely-fitting, dark garment, would glide noiselessly in or

out of the room—which was redolent of Hookah odours—and we had not been long waiting, before the Baboo's nephew made his appearance, and courteously received us. He seemed a very intelligent young man, and conversed very fluently in English. The son of Dwarkanauth soon joined us. He was a youth of about seventeen, slightly formed, and attired in a braided robe, with a green shawl flung over his shoulder, and having on a cap of the same material. His manners were extremely prepossessing; and I never beheld a face in which intelligence and sweetness were more intimately blended, than in this Nogandur Tagore. In India, I should think he must have been a favorite amongst the ladies. Indeed, for the matter of that, he was here; for duchesses, countesses, and ladies, fought at their parties, for the possession of the handsome East Indian. He told me that he was then reading Phædrus, and intended soon to go to college, but not to Oxford—as, in consequence of his being a Unitarian, he could not take the requisite oaths.

During the time we were talking, several gentlemen dropped in—for Dwarkanauth's breakfast-table was a place of fashionable resort, just then. About ten o'clock, the Indian attendant announced that breakfast was on the table, and we all went below.

The meal was served in Anglo-Indian style. There were curries of fish and fowl, pilaus, and



culinary curiosities of all kinds. But let me describe Dwarkanauth Tagore, before I despatch his dainties.

On being introduced to him, he came forward, and, taking my hand, led me to a seat at his left. He was apparently about sixty years of age. On his head he wore a dark-coloured cap, of a shape which I find it is impossible to convey an idea of by verbal description, his hair was short; and of an iron-grey colour, but his bushy eyebrows were very dark, and so was his large moustache. Of course his complexion was dark—but it was the darkness of rich, warm, oriental blood. As to his black, piercing, sagacious-looking eyes, I think I never beheld such; they glanced at you, and you felt that their owner had obtained, from that single look, every necessary information respecting yourself; the nose was finely formed, and the mouth, so far as it could be made out from the moustache, was indicative of great firmness. When he smiled, (and on receiving me, he did so very pleasantly,) a row of dazzling white teeth were observed. There were not on his face any marks of age—not a wrinkle on his forehead, and yet he seemed, I thought, somewhat out of health. His figure was well-knit, and although somewhat thin, firmly built. He was also attired in a dark robe, over which a light morning jacket was thrown—the throat, and neck, from the collar bones, were bare.

I had eaten rice a great many times, and seen it cooked in a variety of ways, but never tasted *such* rice cooked in such a perfect way and manner before. Of course the curry was very different to what we have often passed off as the genuine Indian dish. It was not hot—and in allusion to this circumstance, which elicited a remark from some one present, “Ah,” said Dwarkanauth, “that is how they spoil it—they make it *too* hot—it should not be hot at all to be good.”

“Well,” said he to me, “Well, my friend, how do you like America?”

I answered, that I was delighted both with the country and the people.

“I am told,” said he, “that you have got a book to be printed about it. I want very much to see it. I hope it will not be a Dickens book.

I told him that I had some idea of following the example of other travellers, so far as publishing a book went, and that one was then under weigh; but that I had taken no one as my model, having just written as I thought fairly, without attempting to curry favour on the one hand, or to deprecate criticism on the other.

“Ah!” said he, “I was going to America two years ago, but that Dickens book frightened me, and I did not go. Is it all true that he said, for if so, I would not like the people?”

I told him that I had never been better treated

than in America, and that as for rudeness or incivility, I had not experienced any. As for Mr. Dickens' book, I begged to decline giving any opinion on it, farther than that if certain things he alluded to were common, he must have had sharper eyes than myself, for I had looked for them in vain.

"Do *you* think of going to America?" I asked.

"I do," said he, "and next year; what you have said gives me confidence, but I shall read your book first. Well," said he, "you must come again; come and breakfast with me any morning, and I shall be glad for you to give me some information."

I have seldom met with a man of greater energy and ability than Dwarkanauth Tagore. He talked on all subjects, and evinced a depth and variety of information which was quite surprising. The circumstance of his having been frightened by the "Dickens book," shows what injury is done by the hasty publication of slip-slop books of travels. Here was a wealthy and intelligent foreigner, so startled by misrepresentations, that he absolutely refused to visit a nation of what he was led to believe were a half-civilized people. What has thus happened in one known instance may have occurred in many, of which we know nothing.

After the tea and coffee had been removed, Dwarkanauth had a massive silver box handed to him, from which he took several small pieces of

an eastern root, which he chewed, and then his Indian attendants brought in hookas—such real, genuine hookas as we only see in eastern pictures. I was offered one, but being no great hand at smoking, declined; but it was pleasant to sit and listen to the gurgling of the smoke through the perfumed water; to see the noiseless and lithe motions of the servants, as they attended to them; and to witness the fragrant, thin, blue rings of smoke, as they slowly ascended to the ceiling, expanding into all manner of fantastic shapes.

Whilst the Baboo was busy in conversation with some other of his guests, my friend and introducer took the opportunity of pointing out some of the literary stars who were present.

“There is one of the most brilliant of our writers, and the best historian of his age; the gentleman now talking with Dwarkanauth.”

The opulent East Indian was listening intently to a gentleman who sat beside him. The latter was of the middle height, and rather stout, approaching, indeed, to corpulence. His countenance was highly intellectual. The head might not have thrown a phrenologist into raptures, it not being remarkably well shaped. It approached too nearly to what has been termed the “bullet shape,” and it was covered with short iron-grey hair. The forehead was not high, but it was very broad; the large grey eyes flashed with intelligence, as their

owner spoke, and they seemed to light up, as it were, the whole of the countenance. The nose was short, and slightly aquiline, the mouth rather large, and the chin double. I certainly should not have taken the gentleman to whom these features appertained for what he is on all hands acknowledged to be—the first prose writer of his day. It was Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose splendid essays in the “Edinburgh Review” at once placed him in the foremost ranks of English literary men, and whose “Lays of Ancient Rome” have proved him to be a poet of a high order.

Whilst surveying Macaulay, a gentleman entered the room, who I recognised at a glance, although many years had elapsed since I last saw him. He could not have been much less than fifty years of age. He was a little above the average height, and rather foppishly dressed. His complexion was of a leaden hue: jet black curls, in profusion, hung about his temples and forehead, which was low, and furrowed with transverse lines. Beneath rather large, but well-arched brows, were two eyes which glittered with an undefinable expression.—They reminded one of snakes’ eyes more than of anything else. The long arched nose gave an unmistakably Mosaic character to the entire face, and plainly enough indicated that it was cast in a Hebrew mould. But striking and prominent as was the nasal organ, and startling as was the

expression of the eyes, the mouth claimed my greatest attention. Scorn sat on its upper lip, and withering sarcasm flitted about its angles; the very smile, which played upon it when he entered the room, faded into a sneer,—not that such was meant, perhaps, but because sneering had become the habitual expression of the organ.

I have said that the gentleman to whom I am referring was somewhat foppishly attired. His dark hair had been evidently carefully dressed; his handkerchief was redolent of civet. Across his flashily-patterned waistcoat golden chains meandered, and on his fingers glittered valuable rings; and yet, despite all finery,—such as we are apt to associate with shallowness of mind,—the wearer of it was no common man, for I believe it will be universally admitted that the author of “Vivian Grey,” “Coningsby,” and “Henrietta Temple,” is a man of undoubted genius.

I was greatly struck with the change which the flight of some fifteen years had made in the personal appearance of Benjamin D’Israeli, for he it is of whom I am writing. When I first beheld him, he was even more dignified than now, but he was then in the enjoyment of all the freshness of youth. I fancy I again behold him, as, standing in a carriage, he was paraded through the streets of a small county town in the west of England, the candidate for its representation in Parliament, and

the observed of all observers. If the ladies could have returned the member, most assuredly young D'Israeli would have been the man of their choice. But fortune declared otherwise; the brilliant novelist and slashing orator was defeated by a plain country squire. A banquet, however, was given in his honour, at which his admirers mustered in great force, as they also did at the theatre on the occasion of Mr. D'Israeli's bespeak. On that occasion I sat in a box directly opposite to the rejected candidate. And I shall not soon forget the air of supercilious, nay, of mocking scorn with which "Young Ben" surveyed the bumpkins in the pit. Many times since then have I heard Mr. D'Israeli speak in the House, but never, even when indulging in his bitterest moods of sarcasm, have I beheld him more Satanic in expression, than he was that evening in the little playhouse of T——.

Bustling about the room, now examining some Indian medal or gem, and now piercing into manuscripts with an antiquarian eye, I observed a short, stout, partially bald, and red-faced gentleman, to whom all present seemed to pay much respect. From the snatches of his conversation which reached my ear, he appeared to be at home on most subjects, and he passed from one theme to another with amazing celerity. This was Sir Henry Ellis, the Principal of the British Museum—a man

as well known to the *savans* of Europe and America, as the dome of St. Paul's is to a denizen of London.

There was nothing whatever imposing in Sir Henry's appearance ; but within that shining cranium there lay a store of knowledge almost as various as that which is contained in the great National Collection which is placed under his custody. Eminently fitted for the office he holds, by his attainments, he is none the less so by his courtesy ; and as we have, on more than one occasion, been benefited by the latter, I feel a pleasure in thus acknowledging it.

That elderly gentleman—old, indeed, I may call him, for he has more than numbered his three-score years and ten, who is so intently studying a print of a magnificent Eastern Temple, is John Britton, an antiquary and archæologist, of the very first water. The expression of his countenance is by no means agreeable, and the skin' of his face is as wrinkled and dry as the last mummy which was unrolled by Mr. Pettigrew, that tall gentleman who stands near the chimneypiece. But is it any wonder? From the day when Britton left his service in Clerkenwell, he has spent all his time in solemn cathedrals and dim crypts, and mouldy ruins. Britton is an extraordinary man—but the reader must refer to his Autobiography recently published, if he desires to know some of his history.



Talking about crypts reminds me of a circumstance which occurred to myself not very long ago, and which may amuse the reader.

An artist-friend of mine and myself, one day, paid a visit to the crypt beneath Clerkenwell old church. Mr. A—— was then engaged in publishing a series of views of various portions of old London, of which this Clerkenwell crypt formed a part; for the purpose of sketching them, we entered the gloomy abode of the dead. Coffins in all stages of decay were arranged round the sides, and several were placed one upon another in the centre of the charnel house. It so happened, that some of these were so arranged as to suit Mr. A—— as a seat, whilst he sketched the grooved roof, and I took my seat beside him. After he had finished his task, and had fastened his portfolio, the lad who had held the light, asked me if I knew on whose coffin I had been sitting?

Of course, I was quite ignorant on the point, and told the boy as much.

“That’s the coffin belonging to Scratching Fanny,” was the information afforded us.

Who this same “Scratching Fanny” was, I was at a loss to imagine; and while I was puzzling myself about the matter, the boy removed the lid of the coffin, and there lay, perfect as though she had died but yesterday, the body of a young girl.

And yet she had been an inhabitant of that gloomy crypt, for nearly seventy years!

Every one has heard of the famous imposture of the Cock Lane Ghost—a description which actually puzzled Doctor Johnson, who descended into that very crypt for the purpose of conversing with the spectre! The impostor was the same Fanny, who, with consummate cunning, managed, whilst lying in bed, to produce such noises as made her wondering visitors believe that a legion of devils was in the room. Ultimately the cheat was detected; Scratching Fanny died; and, as I said, owing to some strange circumstance or other, she lies undecayed in the crypt of Clerkenwell, forming a visible and singular link between the times of Doctor Johnson and our own.

. . . . .

Dwarkanauth Tagore having renewed his invitation to visit him again, cordially shook me by the hand, and I bade him farewell. Circumstances prevented my availing myself of the privilege, and within eighteen months afterwards, the Baboo, after a short illness, died, without having gratified his expressed wish of visiting America. His son Nogandar has returned to India; but, as in the case of his friend, the Rajah Ramohun Roy, the body of Dwarkanauth Tagore reposes in an English cemetery.

## CHAPTER V.

## A VISIT TO JOHN CLARE.

ABOUT thirty years ago, the literary world was excited by the announcement that a Peasant-Poet had burst from the obscurity by which he was surrounded, and was about to rush into print with a volume of his verses. Rumour, with her hundred tongues, asserted that another Burns was about to dazzle the world; and when Messrs. Taylor and Hessey published, in 1820, "Poems, descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery, by John Clare, a Northamptonshire Peasant," lords and ladies, and all the curiosity hunters of London, rushed to the book-shops to secure copies. "Magazines" and "Reviews" vied with each other in detecting beauties in the peasant's rhymes, and nearly the whole of the "ungentle craft" were unanimous in his favour. Even that magnate of criticism, the

“Quarterly Review,” patted the bantling on the head, and said, “This interesting little volume bears indubitable evidence of being composed altogether from the impulses of the writer’s mind, as excited by external objects and internal sensations. Here are no tawdry and feeble ‘paraphrases of former poets; no attempts at describing what the author *might* have become acquainted with in his limited reading. The woods, the vales, the brooks, ‘the crimson spots i’ the bottom of a cowslip,’ or the loftier phenomena of the heavens, contemplated through the alternations of hope and despondency, are the principal sources whence the youth, whose adverse circumstances, and resignation under them, extort our sympathy, drew the faithful and vivid pictures before us. Examples of minds, highly gifted by nature, struggling with, and breaking through, the bondage of adversity, are not rare in this country : but privation is not destitution ; and the instance before us is, perhaps, one of the most striking of patient and persevering talent existing and enduring in the most forlorn and, seemingly, hopeless condition that literature has at any time exhibited.”

A few particulars relative to John Clare’s history may not inappropriately be prefixed to the account of a visit which I paid him in his now wretched home.

Clare was born at Helpstone, a village near

Peterborough, of peasant parents ; his father being a helpless cripple, and a parish pauper. The future poet managed to obtain some education by his own extra-work as a ploughboy. From the labour of eight weeks, he generally acquired as many pence as paid for a month's schooling, such as it was. When he attained the age of thirteen years, he, by accident, met with a copy of Thomson's " Seasons," and, anxious to possess such a treasure, he hoarded up a shilling to purchase a copy. At daybreak on a spring morning, he walked to the town of Stamford, six or seven miles off, to make the purchase ; and had to wait some time till the shops were opened. A fine trait of boyish enthusiasm, and of the struggles of youthful genius. Returning to his native village with the precious purchase, as he walked through the beautiful scenery of Burghley Park, he composed his first piece of poetry,—which he called "The Morning Walk."

This was soon followed by "The Evening Walk" and other poems.

A benevolent exciseman instructed the young poet in reading and arithmetic, and he continued his obscure but ardent devotions to his rural muse. Most of his poems were composed, under the immediate impression of his feelings, in the fields, or on the road sides. He could not trust his memory, and, therefore, he wrote them down, with a pencil, on the spot, his hat serving him for a desk ; and

if it happened that he had no opportunity, soon after, of transcribing these imperfect memorials, he could seldom decipher them, or recover his first thoughts. From this cause several of his poems are quite lost, and others only exist in fragments.

Of those which he had committed to writing, especially his earlier pieces, many were destroyed from another circumstance, which shows how little he expected to please others with them: from a hole in the wall of his room, where he stuffed his manuscripts, a piece of paper was often taken, to hold the kettle with, or light the fire.

In 1817, Clare, while working at Bridge Casterton, in Rutlandshire, resolved on risking the publication of a volume. By hard working, day and night, he got a pound saved, that he might have a prospectus printed. This was accordingly done, and "A Collection of Original Trifles" was announced to subscribers, the price not to exceed three shillings and sixpence.

"I distributed my papers," he says; "but as I could get no way of pushing them into higher circles than those with which I was acquainted, they consequently passed off as quietly as if they had been still in my possession, unprinted, and unseen."

Only seven subscribers came forward! One of these prospectuses, however, led to an acquaintance with Mr. Edward Drury, bookseller, Stamford;

and, through this gentleman, the poems were published by Taylor and Hessey, Clare receiving £20 for them.

The appearance of the volume caused an immediate change in Clare's fortunes. The present Earl Fitzwilliam sent £100 to his publisher, which, with the like sum advanced by them, was laid out in the purchase of stock.

The Marquis of Exeter allowed him an annuity of fifteen guineas for life—the late Earl Spencer, a further annuity of £10, and various contributions were received from other noblemen and gentlemen, so that the poet had a clear allowance of £30 per annum.

He now married his "Patty of the Vale," "the rosebud in humble life," the daughter of a neighbouring farmer; and in his native cottage, at Helpstone, with his aged and infirm parents, and his young wife by his side—all proud of his now rewarded and successful genius—Clare now basked in the sunshine of a poetical felicity. His humble dwelling wore an air of comfort and contented happiness. Shelves were fitted up, filled with books, most of which had been sent as presents.—Clair read, and liked them all.

In 1821, he published "The Village Minstrel, and other Poems," in two volumes. The first of these pieces is in the Spenserean stanza, and describes the scenes, sports, and feelings of rural life.

This exalted his reputation as a true poet. Afterwards he contributed short pieces to the annuals, and other periodicals, marked by a more choice and refined diction.

Prosperity is sometimes harder to bear than adversity, and so it proved to be in poor Clare's case. His discretion was not equal to his fortitude: he speculated in farming, lost his little all, and, amidst accumulating difficulties, flew to the cup for relief, thus precipitating his downfall, and at last sank into nervous despondency and despair.

This sad termination of so bright a morning it is painful to contemplate. Amid the native wild-flowers of his song, we looked not for the "deadly nightshade;" and though the example of Burns, of Chatterton, and Bloomfield, was better fitted to inspire fear than hope, there was in Clare a naturally lively and cheerful temperament, and an apparent absence of strong and dangerous passions, that promised, as in the case of Allan Ramsay, a life of humble, yet prosperous, contentment and happiness.

Although every remedy, which skill and humanity could suggest, was resorted to, poor Clare became worse and worse; and at length it was found necessary to remove him from his cottage to a lunatic asylum. There he has now been for some years.

Happening not long since to be in the neighbour-



hood of his place of confinement, I determined to visit him.

Having obtained the requisite permission, I entered the building, and was led by a keeper to that part of it in which the poor insane poet was to be found. His malady was not of a nature which required his being confined to a cell,—and although his case was altogether hopeless, he was by no means insensible of what was passing around him. A glimpse even of the poetic feeling glimmered through the darkness of his soul.

Behind one of the wings of the asylum was a large kitchen and flower garden, and here I found John Clare at work, digging. From his resemblance to a portrait of him, which I had seen some years before, I knew him instantly. He was attired in agricultural habiliments, and presented the appearance of a farmer's labourer. His figure was short, thickset, somewhat clumsy, and by no means prepossessing. His head, unusually large, and out of proportion to his body, was set on a pair of broad shoulders, that had that bend which constant toil at the spade produces. The upper portion of his forehead bulged out considerably, and hung, pent-house-like, over the eyes, which, large, grey, and deeply set, were shaded by bushy brows; his nose was small, slightly turned up, and the mouth large and thick-lipped.

On approaching him, I accosted him by name,

and held out my hand. He looked at me suspiciously for a minute or two, and then accepted the proffered salutation. Gradually we slid into conversation; and, throwing aside his spade, he walked with me round the garden.

Like the conversation of most madmen, that of Clare was coherent enough until the subject of books was broached. Then, his hitherto dull eye blazed up wonderfully, and he talked wildly.— Suddenly he stopped, grasped me by the arm, and dragged, rather than led me to his room.

It was an apartment pleasantly situated, having a garden beneath the windows. There was a bird-cage, with a skylark in it, near the window; and pointing to the iron bars of his apartment, he smiled gloomily, and said, in a strong provincial dialect, “We are both of us bound birds, you see.”

He then sat down by a table, which was covered with books and newspapers, and entered into conversation, so rationally, that no one who heard him would have supposed him a fitting inmate of that mournful place. He told me long stories of his career as a poet, and showed me a few of his later productions; but, alas! they were incoherent enough. He hoped, however, that he should get up a subscription list for another volume, and asked me to put down my name in a book he kept. It was an easy way of pleasing him, and so I did

as he requested. I then asked him for his autograph, and he wrote the following on a slip of paper.— Poor fellow ! he was out again, in fancy, amongst the green fields and woods :—

“ Oh ! who can tell the sweets of May-day morn,  
To waken raptures in a feeling mind ;  
When the gilt East unveils her dappled dawn,  
And the gay wood-lark has its nest resigned,  
As slow the sun creeps up the hill behind ;  
Morn reddening round, and daylight's spotless hue,  
As seemingly with rose and lily twined ;  
While all the prospect round beams fair to view,  
Like a sweet opening flower, with its unsullied dew.”

On my departure, he accompanied me to the garden, and resumed his work. The physician of the establishment told me I was fortunate in seeing him in a pleasant mood, for in general he was reserved and moody. A great many persons called to see him, but he generally shut himself up in sullen loneliness, and could not be prevailed upon to show himself. On one occasion a person had smuggled spirits into his apartment, and had given him some, which had produced sad effects. Ever since he had craved for it.

As in the case of Southey, so in that of Clare, the love of books remained after the light of reason had been quenched. It is related of Southey, that, during his insanity, his favourite place of

resort was his library ; there he would remain for hours, gazing, with vacant eyes, on his beloved volumes.

The poor Northamptonshire peasant-poet, in the midst of all his mental gloom, exhibits a similar partiality for those volumes which in old times afforded him so much pleasure : whenever he is not engaged in the garden, he is either reading or writing ; happily he fancies that he still lives in the literary world ; and very lately I was shown a letter to a distinguished authoress, in which he thanks her for writing to him to meet a select circle of the *literati*, and intimates his intention of joining it. Poor fellow ! he is as dead to the society of his brother authors, as though the grave-stone covered him ;—he already belongs to the past ; but, as a faithful painter of rustic scenes and occupations—as a poet whose fancy was buoyant in the midst of labour and hardship, and whose energy was drawn directly from Nature,—his name will survive when that of many a more aspiring author will be forgotten.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A RECOLLECTION OF THE REV. SIDNEY SMITH.

PLEASANT, wise, witty, Reverend and remarkable Sidney Smith! Can it be that thou art indeed among the Smiths who *were*? But a short time has elapsed since the facetious and racy James, who owned to the somewhat common cognomen of SMITH, passed away from amongst us; and now we are called upon to mourn for the extinction of another star, which shone as brightly in the hemisphere of genius. We have heard the last report from the minor canon of St. Paul's.

The notoriety which the Rev. Sidney Smith acquired in this country, by his Pennsylvanian letters, led to the republication of his numerous reviews, and of his inimitable Peter Plymley's Epistles. The popularity of his works in America has been almost as great as in England: and I question whether the pungent pleasantries which

characterised his animadversions on the “drab-coloured” men of the Quaker State, did not elicit as much admiration as abuse. Be that as it may, all his bonds are cancelled—he has paid Nature’s great debt, and his sufferings, for some time prior to his decease, almost lead us to believe that he discharged it by instalments of agony. Peace to his *manes* !

It was nearly twenty years ago that I first saw Sidney Smith. He was then one of the Prebendaries of Bristol Cathedral, and so popular as a preacher, that the greatest difficulty was experienced in procuring a seat when he officiated—indeed, such was the rage to hear him, that many persons would remain in their pews, for the purpose of securing them, during the interval between morning and evening services. I well remember seeing his portly figure ascending the pulpit stairs—but of his sermon I have little recollection. Mr. (now Lord) Brougham was present, as was also the celebrated Robert Hall ; and these well-known characters, particularly the first, divided the honours of admiring attention with the preacher.

I again heard Sidney Smith preach, on the occasion of his delivering the celebrated fifth of November sermon, in the Cathedral of Bristol, of which he was a Prebendary. On this occasion, he bitterly attacked\* the Anti-Catholic party, and

vindicated the Romanists from the charge of having endeavoured to blow up the Houses of Parliament. A paper war followed this sermon, in which several of the bishops took active part ; but Smith was too much for his opponents. When he could not convince by argument, he overthrew by ridicule ; and, before long, his last antagonist retired from before the never-failing battery of his sarcasm.

At this time, Mr. Smith was a very industrious contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*—which journal he had started, in conjunction with Brougham, Mackintosh, and some other of the distinguished *literati* of the day. Unlike Brougham—who generally prided himself on demolishing, in a single article, literary unfortunates—Mr. Smith paid but little heed to the criticism of individual writers, or the estimate of literary character. A vast range of subjects occupied his time and pen ; and the works which he professed to criticise served chiefly as pegs whereon to hang his opinion on Prison Discipline, the Uses and Abuses of the Game Laws, on Transportation to Botany Bay, on Toleration, on Methodism, on Education, on Irish Bulls, Mad Quakers, Chimney Sweeps, Counsel for Prisoners, and a variety of other topics. But, as my present recollections are rather of the man than of his works, I leave to others the task of dwelling on the excellencies or defects of the latter.

It was the good fortune of the Rev. Sidney Smith to be on terms of friendly and personal intimacy with many of those whose works and opinions he most bitterly deprecated. Amongst those who constantly corresponded with, and sometimes visited him, was the late Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate—a man whose private habits and public opinions were diametrically opposed to those of the Reverend Canon. Southey was stiff, sedate, and so wrapt up in a garb of almost ascetism, that Charles Lamb once stammeringly told him, in my presence, that “G-g-god A-almighty had m-made him for a M-m-monk—but, somehow or other, the C-cowl didn’t fit.” There was a studied gravity, too, about the laureate; and a preciseness, the result of long-disciplined habits, which rendered his manners to some persons cold and repulsive. Sidney Smith was directly the opposite of this. Free, easy and unbending, you could not be ten minutes in his society without feeling at home, and partaking of the feast of humour which he seldom failed to provide. And the beauty of Sidney Smith’s wit was, that it never came out by jerks, as it were;—it flowed easily and freely. Like the girl in the fairy tale, he could scarcely open his lips but some pearl or diamond would drop from his fertile mind. And there was so much good humour blended with his sarcasm upon men and things, that it was



almost impossible to be offended with him, even if the hearer was the object of the sly and covert attack.

I had lost sight of Mr. Smith for some years, (for on his taking possession of the living of Combe Fleury, near the town of Taunton, in Somersetshire, he retired, in a great measure, from the public gaze,) when one day, as I was strolling through Taunton Cattle Market, with a friend, I observed him in busy and animated conversation with a crowd of Somersetshire farmers—his good-humoured face beaming with intelligence, and his hearty laugh resounding above that of his associates. He looked more like a substantial grazier than a divine, and would have been taken for such, by those who did not know him. In an hour or two afterwards, I again saw him at the Farmers' Ordinary; and, as I sat near him, I heard many of the remarks which fell from him, which caused no little merriment in the circle by which he was surrounded. By mixing, in this free and easy way, with practical agriculturists, he acquired a store of knowledge which was eminently useful to him in his writings; and I am informed that it was his habitual practice thus personally to investigate subjects on which his pen was to be employed.

The next time I saw him was at a dinner given by the electors at Taunton, in the year 1834, to

Benjamin D'Israeli the younger, the author of "Coningsby," who had just been ejected by the Reformers of Taunton as their representative. It was rather a strange company for Sidney Smith to be in—but there he was, cracking walnuts and jokes with the merriest of them. I was not near enough to hear his "quips and cranks," but if I might judge from the merriment that was produced in his neighbourhood, he seemed to be in full fire, although surrounded by a host of political enemies, of whom *Vivian Grey* D'Israeli himself was not to be despised. "Young Ben," who, in dress and manners, was the very essence of foppism, shook his "ambrosial curls" with glee. I should like to have seen how he looked some few days afterwards, when perusing some of the most biting strictures on the speech he delivered that night, which appeared in the "Morning Chronicle," and were from the facile pen of his merry dinner-table companion, Sidney Smith.

In the year 1838, Robert Southey paid his latest visit to his native city, Bristol, where, at that time, I was residing. I was first apprised of his being in my neighbourhood by the receipt of the following letter from him, written in his peculiarly neat and classical hand. It is interesting, as in it he anticipates the mental cloud which was then approaching, and which not long afterward darkened his latter days. It was dated from the

house of his friend, Mr. Joseph Cottle, who, it will be remembered, had the honour of being called an "Ass" by Lord Byron.

*"May 15, 1838.*

"MY DEAR SIR :

"I arrived here late last evening, in company with my son, and should be happy if you would company us and Mr. Cottle to Combe Fleury, to-morrow, to pay a long intended visit to my old friend and literary foe, Sidney Smith. This I am the more anxious to do without delay, as I have had, on my journey from Keswick, a sudden and sharp seizure in my head, of which I cannot but apprehend the recurrence, at no very distant day, and which may totally incapacitate me from enjoying any person's society.

"I thank you for the portrait of C——, which I received safely, and when you visit Keswick I shall be happy to show it you, hanging in company, in my study, with that of Kirke White.

"I remain,

"My Dear Sir,

"Faithfully yours,

"ROBERT SOUTHEY.

Of course, I accepted Southey's invitation, and next morning, we set off, in a post-chaise, for Somersetshire. It would be impossible for me,

were I so inclined, to give even a sketch of Southey's conversation, which was interesting in the highest degree. He had formerly resided, himself, in the county through which we were travelling, and there had spent much of his time, with Coleridge and Wordsworth, amongst the Quantock Hills. It will be remembered that the famous Pantisocratic scheme was the result of this union of the Poets.

Of Coleridge, we had many pleasant reminiscences, which some day I may publish ; for the present, I must defer any mention of the "noticeable man, with large grey eyes," and travel towards Combe Fleury.

We arrived at the village about noon, and having alighted at the little inn, we all four proceeded towards the vicarage, where Mr. Smith resided : a country lad officiating as our guide through the somewhat intricate lanes. We had proceeded about three quarters of a mile, when the clod-hopper, mounting a gate, pointed with his huge hand to a portly looking gentleman, in a black dress and top boots, who was leisurely riding along on a rough looking cob, and opening his eyes and capacious mouth to the fullest extent of which each was capable, exclaimed, "There be Paason Smith, yander." And, surely enough, the "Paason" it was, and towards him we made our way.

He did not recognise Southey, but, looking hard

at him, and was about to pass on, when the laureate went towards him, and accosted him by name. Almost instant recognition took place, and the personal friends, although violent political enemies, cordially greeted each other. Smith alighted from his horse, and, directing our guide to take it to the stable, turned with us towards the house, asking a hundred questions, and ever and anon expressing his delight at the unexpected visit.

The vicarage was anything but pleasantly situated ; and, in itself, more resembled a farm-house than a village pastor's "modest mansion." Everything about it was in sad disorder, and plainly enough evinced that no woman's hand presided over the arrangements of the establishment. We got to the front door through a littered up courtyard, and, after passing through a stone-paved hall, were conducted into the library, a large room, full of old-fashioned furniture, where books, parliamentary reports, pamphlets, and letters, lay all about, in most admirable confusion.

"This is my work-shop," he observed to Southey ; "as black as any smithy in Christendom."

And the neat and precise laureate seemed to think so ; for he looked cautiously about for a clean chair, folded up his coat-tails, and was preparing to sit down, when Smith, with a sly gravity, wiped, with his handkerchief, (none of the cleanest, the dust from an old folio edition of the works of

one of the *Fathers of the Church*, and requested his friend to sit on it.

Southey shrunk from the profanation, and respectfully removing the work, preferred the dusty chair. I do not think he much relished the joke, although he said nothing. I could not help thinking that he was mentally comparing, or rather contrasting, the appearance of Smith's library, with that of his own exquisitely neat one, at Keswick. Alas! ere long he would wander into that learned retreat, there gaze for hours, with an idiotic smile, on a favourite black letter volume, and then submit himself, like a child, to the guiding hand of an attendant, and be led out: for, in the days of his insanity, it was a strange fact, that, although fond of finding his way into his beloved library, he never could discover the way *out* of it.

The conversation was pretty general, and chiefly related to the old friends of either party. Mr. Smith spoke of Coleridge in the highest terms, but severely deprecated his indolence. Referring to Charles Lamb's intemperate habits, he remarked: "He draws so much beer, that, no wonder he buffoons people—he must have a *butt* to put it in."

At this time, the question of the authorship of that strange, but clever and learned book, "THE DOCTOR," was a doubtful one, and much mooted in literary circles. Many suspected, and indeed named, Southey as the writer; but he never either

admitted or denied the fact of his being so. The conversation turned on the subject, and Smith, with a roguish twinkle in his eye, told Southey he knew who was the author. Southey calmly inquired the name, and the reverend gentleman remarked—"I remember, some years since, enjoying a conversation with one Robert Southey, in which he used the exact words which I find here"—and he read from a page of "The Doctor" a passage, and then said, "Now, Mr. Laureate, it needs no conjuror to convince any one of common sense that the writer of the passage I have read, and the utterer of those very words to me, seven years since, are one and the same person." Southey bit his lip, but said nothing. After his death, Mrs. Southey divulged the secret, which her husband kept till his death. I question whether she would have made known the fact of the authorship, had not some shabby fellows, by judicious nods and well-timed faint denials, gained the credit of being connected with the work.

We sat down to a plain country dinner ; after which,

"The glasses sparkled on the board."

Like Friar Tuck, the Canon of Saint Paul's enjoyed creature comforts, and many were the flashes of wit which set us in a roar. Southey was very

abstemious, and refused wine, alleging his recent seizure as an excuse. Smith rattled away like a great boy, and with the sole exception of Theodore Hook, I never heard any one so brilliant in conversation. "No subject came amiss to him, and he seemed at home in every one. Of humbugs, both political and personal, he had the most utter detestation, and freely expressed his opinions. I shall not soon forget the ridicule which he that day heaped on the head of Robert Montgomery, who had then just published his poem, "Satan."

The personal appearance of Sidney Smith I have already referred to. He was about the average height, or a trifle above it—inclined to corpulency, and of a fresh red and white complexion—the expression of his features was pleasing, and his snowy hair gave him an air of venerability. Good humour was the prevailing characteristic, but when he talked with severity, his aspect became changed, and few could have beheld unmoved his withering glance.

A hundred witty stories are told of him. Edwin Landseer, the celebrated animal painter, sent to ask him to sit for his portrait. Mr. Smith, in reply, quoted scripture, and said, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" Indeed, he was rather fond of scriptural witticisms; and on the last occasion of my ever seeing him at his lodgings, in Green-street, in London, I remember the con-



versation turned on his Pennsylvanian letters, which had then just appeared in the "Morning Chronicle." He was surrounded by a circle of friends, one of whom, a young man, made an observation, which was to the effect, I think, that he envied him his acquirements and lettered ease. "Young gentleman," said he, taking up a bundle of Pennsylvanian scrip, "I would you were altogether such as I am, *except these bonds*." Of course there was a general roar. Whether such applications of Scripture as these were correct or not, in a grave and reverend teacher, I leave for others to decide.

Few persons are aware that Sidney Smith occasionally indulged in verse-making. He was no mean poet; and I have seen, in MS., pieces of his which would be a credit to any pen. He, however, never published them; not choosing, as he remarked, to peril what little reputation he possessed by "tilting in and at a poetic ring."

On the occasion of my visit to him, at Combe Fleury, he showed us a stone which had enclosed a toad; it had been dug from a quarry in his neighbourhood, and when it was broken open, the reptile was alive. He read to us some lines which he had written on the subject, and Southey requested a copy of them. After some hesitation, he consented. They strike me as being very extraordinary, and with them I conclude this slight sketch of one who, on this, as well as on the other

side of the Atlantic, has attained an enviable reputation. Both of the great men I have referred to, are now slumbering in the dust of death. So is Mr. Cottle, who accompanied us on our visit. Only Mr. Southey's son and myself, of that pleasant party at Combe Fleury, remain on earth.

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### ODE TO A TOAD

FOUND IN A QUARRY-STONE AT COMBE FLEURY.

BY SIDNEY SMITH.

ANCIENT of days! come, leave behind thy catacomb of  
rock,—

What dark sublime of mystery lurks 'neath thy vast vault  
lid!

Did the Almighty Saviour save so mean a thing, to mock  
The Eternities of History—the Egyptian's pyramid?

Like those old monuments which forced tired Time to  
raise his siege,

That pigmy form has baffled death—those eyes resisting  
night,

There, with their never weary lids, by fate's strange  
privilege,

Like two small foggy stars, have kept, through long eclipse,  
their light.

What is the hero's panoply, man's feeble dart defying?  
Against thy adamantine mail, Time's own were vainly  
hurled,—

Thou, in thy pine-plumed canopy in state still living,  
lying,  
Whilst the pale, naked Nimrod scoured his chase, this  
upper world.

Come, let us feel the miracle of motion in that breast!  
Earth's soul perpetual—shaming that which stirs the heart  
of man;

For wandering lights have lost their path—and spheres  
have rushed to rest,  
If missing stars speak truth, since first that little throb  
began.

Since that dim day—day unimaginably far, far back  
In Time's night solitude, when these, thy fortress walls  
were soft,

How oft have storms around thee swept—and forests  
murmured back;  
And oceans boomed about thy cell, and billows broke  
aloft.

Entombed, like the barbarian king beneath a river's bed,  
Time's own—its flood, disparting towers, broke not into  
thy cell:

Assyrian and Cæsarian thrones fell soundless o'er thy  
head,  
Comets and conquerors scowled—and plagues—and  
empires rose and fell.

Where rivers roll their tribute on the changeful ocean's  
shore;  
Their shifting spoils from thousand isles, where snowy  
sea-fowl flock;

Soon, all which they exhibit, gone, the great deep  
thunders o'er  
All that to men at sea appeared a white, eternal rock!

For, of the realms he ravages, and of the thrones he  
shakes,  
Eternity's main river, TIME, makes other thrones and  
realms ;

Which, as on ruins still they rise, still ruin overtakes,  
And what the tributary rears, the parent sea o'erwhelms.

And THOU com'st scathless out from all earth's fields of  
lost and dead !  
Ephemeral to THEE, the crowned with bay or diadem,  
Till man thy ark's dark portal broke, and bared thy  
"jewelled head,  
So THOU, all but immortal, rose, to prove thee dust like  
them.

## CHAPTER VII.

## AN EVENING WITH ROBERT SOUTHEY.

How often, whilst perusing, with feelings of intense interest and delight, the works of some popular or erudite author, have we desired to see their outward and visible appearances. They have informed or delighted us by their productions, and been pleasant mental companions through many an else dreary hour. In our own private and particular image chambers we have hung up what we fancied to be their portraits, coloured and drawn, it is true, as we *would* have them, and not to be depended on, for that very reason. Occasionally, one of those matter-of-fact-men, a Daguerreotypist, has startled us from our dream of fancied physical beauty, by presenting to us a *fac simile* of some well-known writer, Sam Rogers, for instance, and our own creation has vanished into thin air. Romance would not bear the touch of Reality.

In the course of nearly twenty-five years of what is called a literary life, by which I mean a life as much spent in the society of literary men as in the actual *pen occupation*, for the "bread which perisheth," I have scarcely met with half a dozen individuals whose personal appearance and social qualifications at all corresponded with the ideal standard which I had formed; and only in one instance have I known my expectations to be exceeded in beauty by the reality. As this latter instance was both interesting and remarkable, I shall make no apology for a digressional mention of it here.

In the month of July 1824, the body of Lord Byron was brought from Missolonghi to England, and, on being landed from the "Florida," was removed to the house of Sir Edward Knatchbull, who then resided in Great George Street, Westminster. At the house of Sir Edward it lay in state for two days, and was visited by hundreds of persons, who paid their last tributes to the genius of the mighty slumberer by gazing on his coffin-lid. After the lying in state had terminated, it was found necessary to remove the body, for the purpose of placing it in a better constructed leaden coffin than that which had been prepared in Greece. A friend of mine happened to know the undertaker, and kindly offered to procure me admission to the chamber where the removal of the body was to be

effected—an offer which, I need not say, I gladly accepted. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 11th of July, I proceeded to Sir Edward Knatchbull's, and found three or four gentlemen, attracted thither, like myself, to witness the solemn face of the poet for the last time, ere it should be shut up in the darkness of death. Mr. Rogers, the author of the "Pleasures of Memory," Mr.—now Sir John Cam Hobhouse, and John Hanson, Esq., (the two last Lord Byron's executors), and one or two others, whose names I did not learn, were present.

The body lay in the large drawing-room, on the first story, which was hung with black cloth, and lighted with wax candles. Soon after my arrival, the work of opening the coffin commenced. This was soon effected, and when the last covering was removed, we beheld the face of the illustrious dead,

"All cold, and all serene."

Were I to live a thousand years, I should never, never forget that moment. For years I had been intimate with the mind of Byron. His wondrous works had thrown a charm around my daily paths, and with all the enthusiasm of youth I had almost adored his genius. With his features, through the medium of paintings, I had been familiar from my boyhood; and now, far more beautiful, even in death, than my most vivid fancy had ever pictured, they lay in marble repose.

The body was not attired in that most awful of habiliments, a shroud. It was wrapped in a blue cloth cloak, and the throat and head were uncovered. The former was beautifully moulded. The head of the poet was covered with short, crisp, curling locks, slightly streaked with grey hairs, especially over the temples, which were ample, and free from hair, as we see in the portraits. The face had nothing of the appearance of death about it; it was neither sunken nor discoloured in the least, but of a dead, marble whiteness; the expression was that of stern repose. How classically beautiful was the curved upper lip and the chin. I fancied the nose appeared as if it was not in harmony with the other features; but it might possibly have been a little disfigured by the process of embalming. The forehead was high and broad; indeed, the whole head was extremely large—it must have been so, to contain a brain of such capacity.

But what struck me most was the exceeding beauty of the *profile*, as I observed it when the head was lifted, in the operation of removing the corpse. It was perfect in its way, and seemed like a production of Phidias. Indeed, it far more resembled an exquisite piece of sculpture than the face of the dead—so still, so sharply defined, and so marble like in its repose. I caught the view of



it but for a moment ; yet it was long enough to have it stamped upon my memory as

“A thing of beauty,”

which poor Keats tells us is “a joy for ever.” It is indeed a melancholy joy to me to have gazed upon the silent poet. As Washington Irving says of the old sexton, who crept into the vault where Shakspeare was entombed, and beheld there the dust of ages, “It was something even to have seen the dust of Byron.”

Amongst the persons engaged in the performance of the office of removal, I noticed one—a tall, thin man, who spoke little, and seemed absorbed in grief. He would scarcely allow any one to touch the corpse—and, with his own hands, he composed the head in its new resting-place. The words, “My dear lord !” were frequently uttered by him whilst performing his melancholy duties. It was Fletcher—Byron’s faithful valet. This man afterwards told me the particulars of the noble poet’s death, and gave me a lock of his hair. Fletcher did not long survive his beloved master.

I have deemed this little incident of sufficient interest to find a place in my “Sketches.”—And now let me proceed to my “subject proper,” the laureate, whom I had the honour of being acquainted with ; and who, at one period, was a kind and copious correspondent of mine.

It is needless to state the circumstances which led to my acquaintance with one of the most voluminous writers of his day. Suffice it to say, that, long before I had the pleasure of seeing the poet, I had received many letters from him, and have reason to believe that he felt some interest in my welfare. The first time I ever met him personally, was in the year 1838. I was then residing in my and his native city, and engaged in a branch of literary labour which had once been occupied by Southey. This had caused him to feel some interest in my proceedings; and led to a kind wish, on his part, to form an acquaintance.

It was but seldom that he left his beautiful home at Keswick—and he might almost have been termed a hermit poet, for his life was one of almost strict seclusion. Consequently his outward and visible man was little known, except to lake tourists, who were not unfrequently a source of much annoyance to him, by their intrusive visits. He once complained much of this, in one of his letters to me—in which he said, that his daughters could never row him on the lake, nor could he ever take a quiet walk, without being stared at by those who imagined that a poet was some outlandish animal. When he *did* leave home, it was generally for the purpose of making arrangements with his publishers—for he was a methodical man of business—or, for a recreative visit to his native

city, where he had many near and dearly-attached friends. One of these friends was Mr. Joseph Cottle, the

“Joseph of Bristol—the brother of Amos,”

of Lord Byron, and it was from him that I one morning received a kind invitation to meet Mr. Southey at his house, where he was at that time on a visit. It was with no little gratification that I anticipated meeting with one whose writings had afforded me so much delight, and whose considerate kindness had afforded me such service in my literary pursuits.

At that period, I was a mere *tyro* in literary matters, and felt a species of awe whilst in the presence of even the smaller fry of authors. I had only seen one great poet in my time—the Rev. George Crabbe, and *his* venerable appearance had almost awed me; the reader may, therefore, easily suppose that I felt some little trepidation when I lifted Mr. Cottle's knocker one evening, feeling, as I did, that I was about to be introduced to one of the brilliant and shining lights of literature—one who had battled with Lord Byron—had written more books than I could count of pages; and whose fame had gone out even “unto the ends of the world.”

On entering Mr. Cottle's little parlour, after

greeting my kind host, a gentleman, whom I recognised instantly, from the portraits I had seen of him, rose, held out his hand to me, and accosted me by name;—he was tall, and sparely built. “Mr. Cottle,” said he, “we will waive a formal introduction; Mr. ——— and myself are old *paper* friends, and must not meet as strangers.” This unanticipated, kind familiarity, from one whom I had been led to believe was cold and repulsive in his manners, put all my preconceived notions to flight—dissipated my nervous feelings, and made me feel completely at home.

The personal appearance of Robert Southey was very striking. He was, as I have intimated, tall, and slightly built. His forehead, rather receding, and not, phrenologically speaking, indicative of great genius, was surmounted and partially shaded by an abundance of white, silvery hair, combed upwards, and forming a very striking contrast with his jet black, magnificently arched eyebrows, beneath which *glowed* (that is the best word to express what I mean) two of the most brilliant dark eyes I ever beheld. Their beauty did not consist so much in their brilliancy, as in their deep, contemplative expression. His nose was remarkably aquiline; so much so, that it approached to the *beak* formation. But it was in the mouth, which, after all, is the most expressive feature of the human face, that the peculiar charm of Southey’s

looks lay ; the upper lip was finely curved, and slightly projected over the lower ; but it is in vain to attempt a description of it. Nearly every painter has failed to transfer it to canvass ; indeed I have never seen a good likeness of the laureate, for it was no easy matter to catch the ever fitting lights and shadows which, with every changing emotion, passed over his countenance.

There were several other visitors, who had been invited to meet Mr. Cottle's distinguished guest. Amongst them, Walter Savage Landor, the celebrated author of "Pericles and Aspasia," and the "Imaginary Conversations." Landor was a tall, stout man, with a bald head, and a magnificent forehead ; his hair was thin, and besprinkled with grey. In manners he was stiff and distant—quite the reverse of Southey. Southey attracted—Landor repelled. John Foster, whose beautiful *Essays and Miscellaneous Works* were published some time since, was also present. He looked anything but a magnate in the literary world—dressed, as he was, in an old blue coat, with bright brass buttons, corduroy small clothes, much the worse for wear, and top boots. His face was wrinkled and plain, but I never beheld keener little eyes than his ; his head was surmounted with a brown scratch wig, and, taken as a whole, he would rather have been taken for a farmer than the author of works which have truly been styled

“magnificent.” There was also with us a minute local poet, Mr. Romaine Joseph Thorne, who missed no opportunity of dropping small compliments to Southey and Landor, which both of them despised. Miss Cottle, (sister of our host,) a niece of Mr. Cottle’s, Southey’s son, (a youth about eighteen years of age,) and myself, made up the party.

Landor was reserved and proud in his demeanour. to all except Southey, between whom and himself, notwithstanding the wide difference which existed between them in politics, (the Laureate a High Church Tory, and Landor an ultra Whig) there existed a strong and deep friendship.

Foster seldom opened his mouth, and when he did, it was to utter some eccentric remark, which, in one or two instances, might have been deemed almost ill-natured. He had no liking for Southey, and did not know (so I afterwards learned) that he was to meet him at Cottle’s. A few days afterwards, he was invited to join him at dinner at Sir John Hare’s, a brother-in-law of Mr. Cottle’s, but Foster declined, asserting that he would never voluntarily sit down with an apostate, (alluding to Southey’s change of his youthful political opinions). Southey’s son sat silently—Thorne with his eyes and mouth wide open, and how I comported myself is not for me to say.

Tea was announced.—Miss Cottle, a lady of the

old school, was doing the honours. By the way, I may as well mention that Mr. Cottle and his sister resided together, much in the same way as did dear delightful Charles Lamb with his beloved "Barbara." In both cases the gentlemen were bachelors, and the ladies happy in single blessedness, and the society of their literary brothers.—After pouring out the well manufactured infusion of congou, Miss Cottle happened to address the laureate as "Doctor."

"My dear Miss Cottle," said he, "*do* call me *Mr.* Southey, or Robert, as you used to do 'lang syne;' but not 'Doctor.' I dislike nothing so much as that, amongst old friends."

We spent a pleasant hour over the crockery; but all of us know that tea-table conversation is not easily transferable to paper. I am no Boswell, and so the reader must *imagine* a conversational melange—an *olla podrida* of opinions, pleasant enough whilst passing over the mental palate, but leaving nothing either very nutritious or substantial behind.

By degrees, we all of us began to feel more at home—even the stiffness of "that deep-mouthed Boetian, Savage Landor," as the author of "Childe Harold" calls him, wore off; and he discoursed eloquently of Italy and paintings, and his favourite home at Fiesole. Foster, too, vouchsafed some odd remarks, and Southey entertained us with anec-

dotes. By the time the tea-table was cleared away, we were all chatting as sociably together as if we had been friends of years' standing.

A great deal has been said about Southey's reserve in company, and many have accused him of unpardonable pride and *hauteur*. This I think unjust. He was naturally reserved, and his pursuits tended to make him more so. The laureate, in his poem on the Hollytree, has said .

“So serious should my youth appear among  
The thoughtless throng;  
So would I seem among the young and gay,  
More grave than they.”

His sedateness did not, I think, spring from pride; and they who knew him better than I did, hold the same opinion. I have before alluded to what Charles Lamb said of him; but never were there two more direct opposites in social life than Southey and the author of “*Elia*.”

Southey's favourite attitude was that of lying back in his chair, his elbows resting on the arms, and the tips of his forefingers placed on the inner portion of his eyebrows, over the surface of which they continually traversed, his eyes being closed excepting when he spoke. The conversation, at one time turned on Byron—a ticklish subject for both Landor and Southey. The latter said, somewhat egotistically, I thought—but *that* was



Southey's weak point—"No man can honour Byron's genius more than myself; but I fancy I prevented him doing as much harm as he might have done." Lander, who had been fidgetting about in his chair whilst Byron's name was on the *tapis*, surlily remarked, "Byron was a great scoundrel." An exclamation, not a very prudent one, I fear, was just leaving the tip of my tongue, when I luckily bit my lips, and prevented its passing beyond them.

At this period, Mr. Southey was busily engaged in preparing the new edition of Cowper's Works, and in writing the Life of the Bard of Olney. "I have been," said he, "COOPERING all the way down." I had never heard the poet's name pronounced before as he pronounced it, *Cooper*, and ventured to make the remark to him. He said, the poet's family, and Mrs. Unwin, whom he had once seen, never used to say *Cowper*; although that was unquestionably the more correct. He then showed us an original miniature of Cowper, and said, "I can also show you the first letter which it is supposed Cowper ever wrote. I stumbled on it by mere chance, at a gentleman's house, where, about a week ago, I staid for the night; so oddly, sometimes, do things of this kind turn up." He then requested his son to fetch him his writing case, from which he produced the letter, which he

read to our party. It is now included, in a supplementary volume to the *Life and Works*.

We had a long and delightful conversation respecting poor Cowper, and I remember Southey's saying, with much earnestness, that he could have given *Kehama*, *Roderick*, and indeed all he had ever written, to have been the author of the lines to his *Mother's Picture*, which he characterised as being among the most touchingly beautiful to be found in the whole range of English poetry. "What a mournful thing," he added, "that his mental vision was so often obscured." Alas! even then the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, was to be seen in Southey's horizon; a cloud which was soon to cast its melancholy shadow over his own fine intellect. I remember, too, that in connection with this subject he alluded to his wife, who had then very recently died, after years of insanity. "I had," said he to Mr. Cottle, "for a long, dreary time, a living death constantly before me, in the form of my poor Edith. We took our meals, and associated with each other to the last, and I question whether I was more fondly attached to her in her bright days, than in her days of darkness."

Some one in the company, Thorne, I think, inquired of Southey whether he intended to be present at the forth-coming meeting of the British Association. The reply was characteristic. "No," said he, "I never go into crowds." A strong

feature in his character was his love of solitude. His chosen retreat was his library, and men's works, he, in a great degree, preferred to their society. Of his books he himself says ;—

“ My never-failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse night and day.”

I have frequently been in that library, and it certainly was the most splendid private collection I ever witnessed, even Abbotsford not excepted. In Spanish and Portuguese literature it was peculiarly rich, and black-letter lore was abundant. He generally wrote in a little parlour adjoining, and most of his erudite works were composed while his family were seated around him. Some idea of the extent of his library may be formed from the fact that its sale, by auction, occupied seventeen long summer days.

It is a fact that Southey's conversation partook, in some degree, of the egotism which too often defaces his writings.

As an instance of the latter, hear what he says, in a letter to William Taylor, of Norwich :—“ *Me judice*, I am a good poet, but a better historian.” Mind, I do not mean to say that he be-praised himself that evening—but there certainly was evident a considerable partiality for his own works in the remarks he let fall.

Southey's extreme kindness to young and

struggling men of mind is not so well known, or so generally appreciated as it should be. One instance fell under my own notice. I knew in B—— a young man, a lawyer's clerk, who showed so decided a genius for painting that it was really painfully to see him drudging over dry parchments and musty records. I advised him to copy a certain picture, which I knew would much interest Southey; he did so, and I sent it, with a letter from the artist, to Southey at Keswick. I also informed him of the circumstance, and asked his advice as to the young painter's welfare. Southey, who was always punctual as clockwork in his correspondence—for he never allowed a letter to remain unanswered for a single day—in a short time wrote the young man an exceedingly kind epistle, and so interested himself in his behalf, that, at the time I write, the quondam lawyer's clerk is a pupil at the Royal Academy, and a popular exhibitor in the National Gallery.

The day after the party at Cottle's, I accompanied Mr. Southey to see the house in which he was born, and which he wished to show to his son; we then made a call on the Bishop of B——, at Clifton. Southey did not send up his card, and consequently the bishop, who deemed it might be some ordinary visitor, sent down a message that he was engaged. We left, Southey having mentioned his name to the footman. We had not

gone far before the servant came breathlessly after us—for his lordship, on learning the name of his illustrious visitor, was horrified at the idea of sending from his door the author of the “Book of the Church.” We returned—apologies were made, and a very pleasant hour spent.

In the year 1841, after wondering at the unusual circumstance of my letters to Southey remaining unanswered, I received from Mrs. Southey, (formerly Caroline Bowles) or rather a lady nearly related to me did, a heart-touching epistle, informing me of her husband’s insanity. It came on me like a thunder-clap, after a long, ominous silence. Could it be, that he whose voluminous labours had delighted and informed thousands—that the poet, the philosopher, and the historian—was the prey of

“The last infirmity of noble minds.”

Alas ! it was even so. His brain was *worn out*,

“The fervent spirit, working out its way,  
Fretted the puny body to decay,  
And *o’er-informed* its tenement of clay.”

I was told, by one who witnessed the sad scene, that, as he walked along the streets of Keswick, leaning—a frail, broken up man—on the arm of his afflicted and devoted wife, he would stare in

stupid wonder at flocks of geese, and breathe an incoherent wish that he "was as happy as they." His insanity was of the melancholy and sombre kind, as might have been expected.

To the last, he retained his old affection for his books. The way into his library he easily found, and thither it was his wont to repair; and he would sit with a black letter volume open on his lap, gazing on one page for hours, and at times moving his fingers, as if making written extracts. *Out* of the library he never could find his way, without the aid of a guide. But the ruin of a great mind, like his, is too sad a spectacle for contemplation. After two years of mental incapacity,

"Death came o'er him gently,  
As slumber o'er a child."

There was no flashing up of the taper before death—no lucid moment; but during his life, he had made the great preparation, and Hope illuminated the faces of all who gazed upon him when he died.

I saw him borne to his narrow home, in the lonely little grave-yard, across which Grassmere Church flings its shadow. His sons followed him. So did Wordsworth: and never was the grandeur of majestic and solemn grief portrayed in stronger character than on his thoughtful countenance, as

he followed his brother bard to the narrow house ; his feelings were evidently "too deep for tears."

Well, he is gone ! So is John Foster. So are the Cottles ; brother, sister, and niece. Thorne, too, is beneath the "clods of the valley." Six, out of that little circle, vanished for ever. As Burke eloquently remarks : "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue !"

## CHAPTER VIII.

## A DAY WITH HANNAH MORE.

THE first literary lady whom I remember to have seen, was one whose works yet remain to improve and edify her own sex in particular, and the world in general. She was invested, too, with a particular degree of interest, owing to the fact that she was amongst the latest remnants of the blue-stockings of the last century. She had, in her youthful days, mingled in the gay circles of *ton*; had listened to the oracular sayings of Dr. Johnson; echoed the lively sallies which burst forth in Mrs. Delancy's little circle; bandied elegant trifles with that brilliant literary butterfly, Horace Walpole; had been petted by David Garrick; and, in her middle age, and in later years, had been the centre around whom bishops, princes, and philanthropists, and many of meaner name and note, revolved. I



refer to Miss, or, as she is more generally styled, Mrs. Hannah More.

I was but a little fellow when I first saw this celebrated woman ; but, although then scarcely seven years of age, I retain as vivid an impression of her person and manners, as if the interview had occurred only yesterday. Twenty-eight years have rolled over my head since then ; and, during the interval, I have watched, on the disc of life's camera, hundreds of busy and noticeable figures go by, and then disappear in darkness ; but my impressions of the learned old lady are as vivid as ever ; and as I sit, noting down this reminiscence, I can, by a very slight exercise of fancy, see her precise form, and hear her low-toned, musical voice, as distinctly as I did when the sober reality engrossed my attention.

Hannah More was born in the immediate vicinity of my native city,—in the same village, indeed, in which John Foster had for so many years lived, and in which he died ; and, for a considerable portion of her life, she resided within a short distance of her birth-place, in a cottage which she built, and named Cowslip Green. After a seventeen years' residence in this rather lack-a-daisically named locality, during which time she was visited by Mr. Wilberforce, and other persons of note, she removed, in 1802, to Barley Wood, in the village of Wrington, Somersetshire, about

fourteen miles from the city of Bristol, and at this place it was that I first saw her.

My mother had, for many years, been on terms of great intimacy with Hannah More and her sisters; and I remember very frequently having heard her, in our family circle, read letters which she had received from the celebrated authoress. My two sisters were then about receiving their education; and my mother, who possessed a great degree of reverence for the occupant of Barley Wood, presuming on the strength of old acquaintanceship, had written to Mrs. More, to ask her advice as to the course to be taken with respect to their studies. This led to a friendly correspondence, and, at length, to an invitation to the "little girls" to spend a week, during the hay-making season, at Barley Wood, which invitation was, I need scarcely say, accepted.

At that time Mrs. More's "Sacred Dramas" were very popular; and, from hearing my sisters' recitations of them, and occasionally enacting a part in them myself, I became pretty familiar with these compositions. Mrs. More's name, too, was so frequently mentioned in terms of admiration, and almost reverence, at my father's house, that I felt a growing desire to see the individual whose lines I so often repeated, and who was so looked up to. It was, therefore, with no little degree of childish delight, that one morning I set out, with

my mother, for the purpose of fetching home my sisters, who had been spending the promised week at Barley Wood.

I had very vague ideas, then, about people who wrote books ; they were mysterious personages to me ; and in proportion to my delight in any particular work, was my estimate of the outward and visible appearance of its author. I could hardly when I *did* think about the matter, realise the writer to be an actual flesh and blood reality. I used to think of him or her more as of a spirit communing with my spirit, than anything else ; but I have lived to know better, and to experience the sad reality, that many, whose written productions are of an almost imperishable nature, have themselves been, emphatically, but “ of the earth, earthy.”

There were no iron roads in those days, so intersecting the country in all directions, that, viewed from a height, it appeared, as if a monstrous grid-iron had been laid on the earth ; and, on the road to Barley Wood, not even a stage-coach ran ; so that my mother and myself had to journey towards the place of our destination in what was called, a “tilted waggon.” I had scarcely ever been in the country before ; and oh ! how keenly I enjoyed that homely ride in the early morning ; for we were on our way soon after sunrise, as we intended to make a long day of it. In

anticipation of the visit, I had, with a childish vanity, *crammed* myself with scraps of Mrs. More's poetry ; and well I remember that I had learned by heart, in the hope that I should be asked to recite it to the authoress, "The Foolish Traveller ; or, a Good Inn is a Bad Home." As we ascended the high Somersetshire hills, I would alight from the cart, and, running on before it, gaze far into the hazy distance, expecting to view some such imposing-looking house as I anticipated seeing at the end of our journey ; and I would ask a thousand questions of my mother, about Mrs. More, until her patience was almost exhausted ; and then I would recite, to make sure that I had not forgotten it, the fable ; and so things went on, until, at length, my mother held me, whilst I stood tiptoe on the front seat of the vehicle, and pointed out the long-wished-for spot, while we were yet two miles from it.

We were on the turnpike road, and Barley Wood lay about the distance I have mentioned from us, to the left. It was a picturesque cottage residence, on a hill side, embosomed amongst trees. Behind it rose a gently sloping hill, richly wooded ; in front was a lawn of emerald verdure, enclosed by a shrubbery, from which the ground gently declined, until it blended with the valley of Wrington. On our left were the Mendip Hills, and the Quantock Range (famous because of the wanderings of Cole-

ride, Lloyd, Southey, and Wordsworth, among them : it was on the Quantock Hills that the "Ancient Mariner" was composed) rose in the blue distance. The houses of the little village of Wrington lay beneath us, and its pretty tower formed a conspicuous object in the landscape. As we descended the hill, my mother told me of Locke, and when we reached the village, and quitted the tilted cart, she led me to the church, still speaking of the great man. The sharp air of the morning had made me hungry, so we went into a cottage near the church-yard, indeed, it was in the pathway leading to it, and I got a draught of milk, and a piece of brown bread and butter, and after despatching these creature comforts, I was informed that I had taken my morning meal in the very room in which John Locke was born. The great philosopher was buried in the adjoining church.

Barley Wood was but a short distance from Wrington, and we determined to walk it. At eight o'clock, we quitted the village, and when we had nearly reached Mrs. More's house, my two sisters, who had been watching us from the lawn, came dashing down the lane to meet us, their curls streaming in the wind, and their cheeks glowing with exercise. They were in raptures with Mrs. More, and in five minutes told me all that had occurred during the week. As we neared the gate, they would have dragged me triumphantly

into the "Presence," but my half awe for learned people came over me, and grasping my mother's hand, I entered the shrubbery door, and walked up the lawn.

We had scarcely reached the house, when an elderly lady approached, and welcomed us. She was plainly dressed, and presented nothing extraordinary in her appearance. This was Hannah More's sister, Martha. She invited us to follow her to the garden, where she said we should find Hannah.

At the back of the cottage was a flower garden, arranged with exquisite taste, and surrounded with a privet hedge; which hedge, by the way, exhibited one of the absurd fashions of the time—a fashion not even yet altogether exploded in some of the retired rural districts of England—I mean that of clipping the foliage into fantastic shapes of birds, vases, &c. With this exception, Mrs. More's flower garden was faultless in arrangement. Near one of these deformed vegetative barriers, we encountered the object of our search.

Hannah More did not perceive us as we approached, for her back was towards my mother and myself, as we walked up the garden pathway, and she was busily employed, too, in trimming one of the before-mentioned specimens of ornithology. She was dressed in a black silk gown, with a remarkably high waist, according to the fashion of

the day—so high, indeed, that it seemed to be just beneath her arm-pits; this gave an appearance of unusual length to her figure, and afforded a striking contrast to the hour-glass contractions of the present time. Both fashions strike me as being equally ungraceful, and the latter absolutely dangerous; for, a few days since, as a lady bowed to me on the Common, I trembled lest she should snap off her waist-band. Mrs. More's shoulders were covered with a thick shawl, deeply edged with black lace, for she was an invalid, and her feet were protected by substantial shoes, worsted stockings, and pattens. On her head she wore what was called a high mob cap, with ample bordering of lace, nicely plaited, and tied in a monstrous bow under the chin. On her hands she had black cotton gloves, with long sleeves, the tips of the fingers having been cut off. As soon as she heard our voices, she turned round, and held out her right hand (in her left was a pair of garden scissors) to welcome us.

This celebrated woman was then past seventy years of age, and very feeble in health, but her face had a surprisingly vivacious expression. I have seen many portraits of her, but never one which conveyed an accurate idea of the original. Pickersgill's, prefixed to the English edition of her works, is the best, but that is too *flashy* in detail for its somewhat staid and sober subject. Her features were small, and furrowed with the lines of age,

but her complexion was remarkably clear—almost pure red and white, owing no doubt to her long residence in the country. Her forehead was nearly concealed at the sides by an abundance of false hair, which was disposed in the shape of two huge bundles and bunches of long spiral curls—but in the centre, where these appendages met, or rather from whence they diverged, there was visible an ample cerebrie development. The nose had evidently, at one time, been short and thick, but it was now thin and slightly hooked. The mouth was but slightly retracted, and the lips wonderfully plump for so old a woman; her chin was doubled and dimpled. But the most striking part of her countenance was the expression of her eyes, which were coal black, deep set and very brilliant. None of their fire seemed quenched, and in earlier days they must have been very expressive; indeed, they were so when I saw her, despite the drawback of a faded set of features to match them. Altogether, she was in appearance very plain, very prim, and very precise. After the usual civilities and courtesies had been exchanged, we adjourned to the house, and were ushered into a neat little parlour, the windows of which commanded a fine view of the delightful vale of Wrington. Here a breakfast, consisting of tea, coffee, rashers of bacon, and eggs, and rich clotted Somersetshire cream, was laid, and Hannah More, her sister Martha, my



mother, sisters and myself, together with a very plain, stiff looking body, a Miss Frowd, sat down to it. Mrs. More, in introducing my mother to Miss Frowd, said she was her "right hand." Elsewhere she describes her as "her domestic chaplain, secretary, house apothecary, knitter, and lamplighter; missionary to her numerous and learned seminaries, and without controversy, the Queen of Clubs"—alluding to the charitable institutions, where she took the place which her aged friend could no longer occupy.

For breakfast, Hannah More merely took a little milk and water, in which she placed some plain bread, and of this simple fare she partook very sparingly. "I live almost entirely on physic," said she, to my mother, "and am the best patient Dr. Lovell has. This, however, is no trial to me; for many years ago I had a violent illness, whilst visiting Mr. Thornton, in London, and on recovering from it, lost entirely both my smell and taste. Indeed," she continued, "I never knew a year to pass over my head, a considerable portion of which was not spent in bed, to which I have been confined by illness."

The room in which we sat was decorated with a number of portraits, most of them dignitaries of the Church. I noticed that one of the frames contained no picture, and with very childish curiosity, asked the reason of it.

"Oh!" said the old lady, "that frame contained the portrait of a player, my dear, an old friend of mine; but as I thought him hardly fit to hang in such good company as bishops, I have removed Davy Garrick to my study."

Now I had often heard the saying, "*As deep as Garrick*," and I inquired whether her friend, Davy Garrick, was the personage alluded to? Mrs. More turned to my mother, and smilingly said, "Of all the persons I ever knew, poor Davy was the last, whose name I should have thought would have been associated with the idea of design. Excepting in his art, he was simple, almost to silliness."

Talking of Garrick, reminds me of an anecdote which I heard Mrs. More relate on a subsequent occasion. Lest it should escape my memory, I will just mention it here, as I am not aware that it has ever been made public.

It is well known that Mrs. Garrick was most devotedly attached to her "dear Davy," as she called him. When the great tragedian died, his wife would not allow a single article in his room to be removed from its place; and, as soon as the coffin was borne from the house, the room in which he died was locked up, and for thirty years no one was permitted to enter it. At the end of that period, Mrs. More informed me, she happened to be visiting her old friend Mrs. Garrick, whom she

described as a "little bowed down old woman, who went about leaning on a long gold-headed cane, dressed in deep widow's mourning, and always talking of her "dear Davy." Some circumstances occurred which rendered it necessary that she should quit her residence, and Mrs. More was present with her when the long closed room was opened. She said that when the door was thrown back on its hinges, and the window shutters unbarred, the room was actually darkened by millions of moths, which arose from the mouldered bed and the hangings of the room—every square inch of the bed furniture was eaten through and through, and, on the air being admitted, dropped to pieces. The solid articles of furniture alone remained uninjured—but the mouldy smell of every thing around was so unendurable, that the place had to be fumigated before it was habitable, even for a short time.

Breakfast having been despatched, the domestics were summoned to family devotions, a custom rigidly observed by Mrs. More every morning and evening. There were eight servants—a large number, it may seem, for two or three maiden ladies to keep; but it must be remembered that almost from morning until night there was a continual influx of company at Barley Wood. Mrs. More conducted the service, which consisted of a portion of the Liturgy; and after this had been read, we all knelt down, and the venerable lady

offered up a short extemporaneous prayer, in the course of which she mentioned every individual present, by their given names, aptly introducing, where it was practicable, texts of Scripture applicable to their condition or circumstances. Her enunciation was slow, solemn, and very distinct; and it was a fine impressive sight to see that pious woman, whose fame had literally gone out into the ends of the earth, bowing before the mercy seat, and humbly soliciting for the meanest one in her household, those blessings which make rich, and add no sorrow.

Attached to the residence was a large room, in which it was her custom, every morning, to receive the recipients of her bounty, and where she occupied many hours in the manufacture of articles for the use of the poor, and for charitable purposes; to this place we accompanied her, and there remained some time, witnessing her labours of love. And a pleasant thing it was to witness the quiet way in which she did good—there was no ostentatious parade; the poor came to her, as to a friend, for assistance or advice, and never went away unrelieved. The number of garments she gave away that morning was really surprising. To most of the articles was pinned a scrap of paper, on which a text of Scripture was written in her own handwriting; sometimes a tract was added, and in no case, where it was really needed, did

any one leave the room without an order on the housekeeper for a supply of food.

During the time my mother was closeted with Hannah More, I rambled, with my sisters, about the house and garden; and I well remember our being attracted to the front gate, by the arrival of a carriage, from which two gentlemen and a lady alighted, and inquired for the lady of the mansion. One of the strangers was a personage far advanced in years, and of a very venerable appearance. He was evidently in ill-health, and coughed dreadfully. As he walked up the broad gravel walk, he dropped his stick, and I ran to pick it up for him. When I had done so, he took me by the hand, patted me on the head, and asked me my name. The lady, who was with him, called my little sisters to her, and they soon got friendly, as they rested on a rustic seat. She was, also, in years, and dressed quite in the old style. I have a distinct remembrance of her light flaxen hair, which she wore in large curls—and of her faint, but pleasant smile, as she took liquorice from her pockets, and gave us children some, which quite won our hearts. The third stranger was a middle-aged gentleman, of harsh and rugged features. His hair was dark, and his eyes of a light grey colour. When he spoke, it was with a broad Scotch accent, and a harsh, disagreeable sounding voice, quite different to the winning tones of the

old gentleman and lady I have just described. I did not know who either of them were, and soon left them, to proceed with my play.

It was really astonishing what a number of visits Mrs. More had that day ; and I afterwards was informed, that every day, in this respect, was alike. How she managed, with all this visiting, to get through her extensive correspondence, and her charitable engagements, I cannot imagine.— She herself says, in 1825—

“ I think I never was more hurried, more engaged, or more loaded with cares, than at present. I do not mean afflictions, but a total want of that article for which I built my house, and planted my grove,—I mean retirement ;—it is a thing I know only by the name. I think Miss Frowd says I saw eighty persons last week ; and it is commonly the same every week. I know not how to help it. If my guests are old, I see them out of respect ; if young, I hope I may do them a little good ; if they come from a distance, I feel as if I ought to see them on that account ; if near home, my neighbours would be jealous of my seeing strangers, and excluding them. My levee is, however, from twelve to three o'clock ; so that I get my mornings and evenings to myself, except now and then, an old friend steals in quietly for a night or two.”

At this time, too, Hannah More had been confined seven years and two months to her apartments,

which consisted of two rooms ; to which it was no want of strength, however, which confined her, but the fear of an exposure to cold, which often threatened to be fatal to her.

The dinner hour, at Barley Wood, was four o'clock ; and as a special favour, we children were allowed to dine in the same room with the great people—a little table being set for us in one corner. I must mention, however, that, prior to dinner, whilst taking a turn with my mother and sisters in the garden, the former asked me if I knew who the old gentleman was, who had patted me on the head in the garden ? I replied in the negative, of course.

“ Don't you remember the ‘ Evenings at Home ? ’ ”

“ Yes, that we do,” exclaimed all three of us.

“ Well, my dears, that old gentleman, and the lady who was with him, wrote them.”

“ What ! was that old gentleman Dr. Aiken, and the kind lady, who gave us the barley sugar, Mrs. Barbauld, mamma ? ”

“ The same,” was the reply ; and oh, how proud I felt to have been noticed by such learned folk.

“ And pray, who was the other gentleman who was with them ? ”

“ That,” said my mother, “ is a Scotch minister, and his name is Chalmers.” It was even so ; but the since celebrated divine did not interest us half as much as the children's book-makers. I believe,

when we returned home, that we did little else, for a week, but read "Evenings at Home," and "Barbauld's Poems," and tell every one that we had seen the writers.

I was, of course, too young to appreciate the conversation at and after dinner; but I greedily drank it in, and I well remember that anecdotes of Doctor Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, Miss Burney, Garrick, and others, were related. I wish now that I had been old enough to have remembered them. But, as it is, a very slight recollection of them remains.

All through the day, Hannah More was exceedingly kind to us, and after dinner, we were allowed to sit at the dessert—when, for the edification of the company, my sisters and myself recited a portion of one of Mrs. More's sacred dramas, with which performance, I believe, both ourselves and the audience were very well satisfied—at least, I know I was. Then we were asked sundry questions, and our hostess, having ascertained that I had a liking for poetry, gave me, with a kiss, a copy of Campbell's "Gertrude of Wyoming"; it was of quarto size, and a presentation copy from the author. The kiss soon evaporated, but the book I retain—with my name written in it by her hand—to this day, and it is needless to say I highly value it.

Such was my first interview with the author of



"Cœlebs in search of a Wife." In the year 1828, she removed from Barley Wood to Clifton, where, at her residence on Windsor Terrace, I frequently saw her; and, as my parents resided near, she would often send for me to read to her the newspapers of the day. Many is the anecdote she has told me of her early days, and graphically would she describe the brilliant society in which she moved, whilst a young woman, in London. Of Dr. Johnson she was in the habit of speaking in very enthusiastic terms; and frequently said that there never was, and never would be, his equal for solid acquirements. Sir Joshua Reynolds, she said, was a pompous and somewhat disagreeable companion, in consequence of his excessive *hauteur*;—but I might fill columns with her colloquial personal criticisms, which were exceedingly delightful to listen to, but might prove tedious on paper.

In talking with Hannah More, one seemed to be living in the brilliant times of Chapone, Montague, Walpole, Prior's "Noble, lovely little Peggy," (the Duchess of Portland,) and others of the blue-stocking coteries of the last century. She was very anecdotal, and told a story or an anecdote with much point—and her having been a member and a star of the celebrated circles, of which Madame d'Arblay's "Diary" gives us such delightful and sprightly glimpses, added greatly, of course, to the interest of her narrations. She was nearly,

if not quite, the only survivor of those re-unions, and when Hannah More passed away, the last link which connected those times\* with our own was broken.

The last time I saw Hannah More was in the autumn of the year 1833, when she was lying on her death-bed. My mother went to bid her old friend farewell, and I accompanied her. But the venerable woman was then a mere wreck. Her frame had long been enfeebled, and now the fine gold of her mind had become dim. She knew no one, and took so little nutriment, that it was wonderful how she survived so long. She was greatly altered from what she was when I first saw her—indeed, I should not have known her. I took a last glance, and quitted the chamber. Three days afterwards she died; and, in a week from that date, I saw all that was mortal of Hannah More laid in a vault in Wrington Church, near the spot where John Locke was buried.

## CHAPTER IX.

## A MORNING PARTY AT SAMUEL ROGERS'S.

WHO has not heard of the famous lobster suppers of Pope, and the witty re-unions at "Tom's Coffee House," where ruffled gallants met, to discuss liquor and literature? Or who has not longed to make one of such a party as that described, or rather referred to, by the sprightly Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who, with chosen associates,

"When the cares of the day were all passed,  
Sat down with champagne and a chicken at last;"

and, to what was far better, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul?" These "long ago" affairs have had their Boswells to chronicle them; and so faithful have been some of the accounts furnished, that we seem, whilst perusing them, to "live o'er each scene." In imagination, we jostle against rapiers

and ruffles—our modern legs get entangled in the many folds of the ample fardingale and hoops, and high heels startle us with their quaint appearances.

The times have changed—the days of the blue-stocking clique are remembered with the things that were. Hannah More, Mrs. Delancy, Mrs. Thrale, and Madame D'Arblay, no longer sit sipping their congou, and listening to the oracular sayings of Doctor Johnson, or indulging in sprightly remarks and flippant nothings. Will's Coffee House is *non est inventus*. "Tom's" exists but in name. Ranelagh, with its variegated leafy arcades, and brilliantly lighted bowers, is no more; and all who gossiped so delightfully, or talked so learnedly, but a few years ago, have passed away, leaving only legacies of wit or wisdom to their descendants, who, in losing Vauxhall, have parted with the latest remnant of old-fashioned gaiety.

The times have greatly changed; Club-houses have knocked Coffee-houses into nothingness, and Almack's has annihilated the literary coteries; but there are yet two or three chosen retreats sacred to genius and talent, and I am about to glance at one of them.

How seldom does it happen, in this world of ours, that poetry and prosperity go hand in hand!—penury and privation are generally, and even proverbially, the lot of him who dares to build the

lofty rhyme ; indeed, it has been thought that opulence is destructive of genius, and that literary butterfly, Horace Walpole, whose reputation rests only on his letters, and whom, from my very soul, I despise, chiefly on account of his heartless treatment of the “marvellous boy,” Chatterton, said “singing birds should not be too well fed.”

Samuel Rogers is an exception to the almost general rule that authors should be poor. And who has not, at some time or other, heard of the author of the “Pleasures of Memory?” He is not gifted, as Byron was, with beauty of person ; so far from it, he is the very opposite of “good looking,” as it is termed ; but he is rich—a very Cræsus. A London banker—he can draw cheques alike on the Bank of England and on the treasury of the Muses ; and what is better, find each duly honoured. He has an exquisite taste, and possesses abundantly the means of gratifying it. Art lays her tributes at his feet, and Genius is at his beck and call. For him Science labours, and at his bidding Music pours forth its melodious offerings. He possesses the magic talisman, MONEY—which, like the slave of the lamp, in the Arabian tale, fulfils all his requirements, and surrounds him with all that heart can wish. Verily, if wealth, taste, and refinement, can confer happiness on mortal, Samuel Rogers must be a satisfied man.

About six years ago, whilst on a visit to some

friends in London, I spent a day with Coleridge, who then resided with Mr. Gilman, at Highgate. Whilst there, the poet received a note from Mr. Rogers, inviting him to breakfast, in St. James's Place, on the following morning. Coleridge, knowing that it would gratify me to accompany him, very kindly asked me to do so, saying that he could take the liberty of introducing a friend, and I agreed to go.

I shall not, at present, dwell upon my recollections of the 'noticeable man, with large grey eyes,' that I shall reserve for a future paper of the series; but, lest it should escape my memory, and as I intended this sketch to be rambling and desultory, I will here just relate an anecdote of Coleridge, little known, and strikingly characteristic of his dreaming propensities, even in childhood. It has been published in only one work, which obtained a very limited circulation, entitled "Early Recollections of S. T. Coleridge, by Joseph Cottle," and was furnished to Mr. C——. by myself.

Coleridge's father was a clergyman, residing at the small town of St. Mary Ottery, in Devonshire; and a near relative of mine, then a young girl, at the time of the incident I am about to relate, also lived there. One night she was awakened from her slumbers by the bellman of the town, who startled the quiet of the place by bawling out the following:—

“Lost and strayed away, Samuel Coleridge, the vicar’s child—”

In consequence of this announcement, all who could, left their beds and proceeded in search of the little truant. My relative, among the rest, who knew the child well, and to whom the little fellow was much attached, joined the band of searchers, who sought a long time, but without success. After three hours’ wandering, many returned to the distracted parents, with no tidings of their lost one; but the young girl determined not to give up the matter so easily, and, in pursuance of her determination, to leave no chance of finding him untried, she proceeded towards the banks of the little river Otter, which she knew was a favourite haunt of the child’s.

She had not gone far, when she fancied that she heard a low, moaning sound, but thinking it to be merely the noise of the water, she was passing on, when she distinctly recognised a child’s voice. The sound led her to the river’s edge, and there, much to her surprise and satisfaction, she found Samuel Taylor Coleridge, then a child of four years of age, lying in the moonlight, on the brink of the stream, with his head hanging over the bank; his little hands clutched a bunch of sedge, which grew out of the water, and he was tugging away at them with might and main, and murmuring in his sleep—“Pull up the clothes, Molly, my

feet are cold." With every effort at the reeds he pulled himself a little over the bank, and in a few more minutes, in all probability, he would have fallen into the stream, which was deep enough to have prevented the "Ancient Mariner" from having ever been sung by his musical lips. Even at so early an age, the little fellow was a dreamer. I need not add, that his return was greeted with lively demonstrations of delight by those who knew him; and who did not?—for "little Sammy" was a town pet.

But to return to Rogers and his breakfast. On the following morning, for a wonder, Mr. Coleridge called for me at the time he had appointed, and we proceeded together, in a hack carriage, to St. James's Place. Mr. Rogers himself received us, and as none of the other invited guests had arrived, I had a favourable opportunity of observing the venerable poet.

I had anticipated seeing what is termed a *plain* face; but I had not pictured to myself one so unpoetical as Rogers's. Byron's lines on it, ill-natured and uncalled for as they were, were at least *pictorially* true to nature. There was recently published in the "Pictorial Times," or "London Illustrated News," I forget which, a sketch of him, taken at the National Gallery, in the act of examining a painting. The sunken eye, shrivelled nose, toothless jaws, and retracted lips, are to the



life. But though Time has been busy with the poet's mortal part, he has not interfered with the jewel it contains. That remains undimmed; and although it emits fewer rays than of yore, its capability of doing so is not destroyed.

The poet is of middle stature, and unbowed by age. Indeed, in his motions, he is, to use a common but expressive figure, as "brisk as a boy." Nothing on earth is more delightful, I think, than a cheerful, intelligent old man. And such is Samuel Rogers. He, indeed, possesses all "the pleasures of memory," and has had the rare good fortune to live and experience what he sung about years and years ago. His conversation was lively and piquant, but did not exhibit any of those sallies of wit, which are so often attributed to him in the newspapers, under the head of "Sam Rogers's last," &c. To Coleridge's observations he was profoundly attentive; but the great conversationalist was not in a very talking humour, and I was rather glad of it, as it gave me a better opportunity of using my eyes, than I should have had, had his words fallen on my charmed ear. Mr. Rogers received me very kindly, without an introduction, for Coleridge, with his usual absence of mind, or rather utter disregard of all the minor courtesies and usages of society, neglected to present me to Mr. Rogers, until the latter looked very hard at me, and I reminded Coleridge that he had a companion.

What a magnificent room was that library of Rogers's? There were paintings from the hands of the best ancient and modern masters, in gorgeous frames. Portfolios of the choicest and rarest prints—water colour drawings, by every artist of celebrity, of past and present times—rare specimens of *virtu*, which would have thrown the proprietor of Strawberry Hill into a very flutter of excitement. Busts, some brown with age, and others in all the brilliant modern whiteness of Carrara marble; costly gems, and priceless intaglios; books, curious in their old literal *board* covers, with ancient silver clasps and venerable letters; manuscripts, so precious from time, and in consequence of the labour which had been bestowed on them by grey monks, in solemn old cells, ages since, that they were shrined in crystal cases. There was a large piece of amber, in which was a fly enclosed, perfect and unmutilated, leaving us to wonder how it got there and achieved its transparent immortality. Sidney Smith once taking it up said, "Perhaps it buzzed in Adam's ear." And there were vases of exquisite form and workmanship—relics from Pompeii and from far away Ind: and all so tastefully disposed that no *Museum* effect was produced, nor did any one object so obtrude itself as to detract from the apparent value of the impression produced by another.

On a pedestal was a bust of Pope, modelled, at

least so far as a part of the drapery was concerned, by the artist (Roubillac, I believe,) in the presence of Mr. Rogers's father. But there were two objects in the room, which, more than any others, engrossed my attention; the one represented the enormous wealth of its possessor, and the other indicated his keen appreciation of the value of mind. These articles were simply two small pieces of paper, in gold frames. One of them was a Bank of England note for one million pounds sterling, and the other the original receipt of John Milton for five pounds, (the sum he received for the copyright of "Paradise Lost," from Simmonds, the bookseller.) The bank note was one of the only four which were ever struck from a plate, which was afterwards destroyed. The Rothschilds have one impression; the late Mr. Coutts had another; the Bank of England the third, and, as I have said, Mr. Rogers decorates his parlour with the remaining one. There it hangs, within any one's reach—a fortune to many, but valueless to all excepting its owner. No one would think of stealing it, for it would be only as so much waste paper. It never could be negotiated without detection, and, were it destroyed by fire, from its peculiar character no loss would ensue to Mr. Rogers. At his word, however, it might be transformed into a golden shower. He, alone, is the

magician who can render it all-powerful for good or evil.

With a far different class of feelings, I gazed upon the handwriting of

“The blind old man of London.”

I imagined the mighty man at his dwelling in Artillery Walk, near Bunhill Fields Burying Ground, dictating to his daughter, and sitting in his antique chair,

“Whilst visions rose,  
Of gorgeous beauty, round the bard’s repose ;”

or quietly enduring the shrewish temper of his wife, who, if report be true, sometimes made the house too hot to hold him. Yes, that very paper had been touched by Milton ! His own hand had traced those almost illegible characters ! Oh, that the paper had possessed the power of one of Leitch & Whipple’s daguerreotype plates, so that we might have had the poet’s face stamped on its surface !

One after another, the breakfasting party dropped in. I knew most of them by sight, and all by repute. Leigh Hunt was amongst the earliest arrivals. He was about the average height, and looked somewhat older than I should have supposed—but anxiety and adversity had done their work on his frame. Unlike Rogers, his life had been one of privation and endurance. His

hair was parted in the very centre of his forehead, and carefully combed towards each side. Once it had been raven black—but now it was so thickly streaked with the frostwork of mental toil and time, that it appeared of iron grey. His eyes were very dark and vivacious, and beamed with that kindly expression which any one may be sure Leigh Hunt wears, who reads his delightful works. There was a fulness about the lower part of his face, which rather marred the general pleasant expression, but his mouth was indicative of much amiability of disposition ; his cheeks were whiskerless, which gave somewhat of a boyish air to his appearance, and this was increased by his manner of wearing his collar, which was ample, and turned down, *a la Byron*. There was a slight stoop of his shoulders—that bend which is almost always a characteristic of studious men ; and his dress was ill-fitted, and hung ungracefully about a spare and somewhat attenuated figure. So much for the author of “*Rimini*,” who, as soon as he had greeted the master of the house, strolled towards the bookshelves.

Thomas Campbell had been invited, but, much to my sorrow, he did not make his appearance, although I looked anxiously for him amongst every new group of visitors. I should like to have seen the poets of HOPE and MEMORY together, but it was not to be. I afterwards frequently saw Mr.

Campbell, and, in a future sketch, shall introduce him to my readers.

Crofton Croker, author of the "Fairy Legends of Ireland," came into the room, arm in arm, with William Jerdan, the editor of "The Literary Gazette." Croker and Jerdan presented a striking contrast; the fairy chronicler being little of stature—some four feet nothing—and Jerdan standing over six foot in his stockings. Little Croker had a shining bald head, a round, dumpling, good-humoured face; and Jerdan a physiognomy of hard, Scotch character, that looked as if it had been washed in vinegar, and rubbed dry with a nutmeg grater. The rich brogue of the Irishman, and the broad twang of the Scotchman, were conspicuous enough. The faces of these gentlemen were by no means indices of their respective dispositions; for it is well known that Croker is by no means indulgent to others—whereas, Jerdan is a merciful critic, a kind-hearted man, and a fosterer of struggling men of genius, such, for instance, as Thomas Miller, the author of "A Day in the Woods," &c.

And there was Miller amongst the guests. He was pointed out to me by Dr. W. Cooke Taylor, as profound a scholar, and as amiable a man, as ever trod the Irish soil. At Trinity College he was the first man of his day, and now he stands, in many respects, second to none. As a Hebrew scholar, he has not his equal.

Thomas Miller I looked at with no ordinary interest. He had just then made a sensation in London, and was amongst the lions of the day. His history is somewhat singular. I shall avail myself of the privilege afforded by this discursive sort of scribbling, and relate the chief incidents connected with it, as I afterwards heard them from his own lips.

I had read, with considerable interest, a work entitled, "A Day in the Woods, by Thomas Miller, Basket-Maker," and felt not a little delighted with his vivid and graphic descriptions of rural and forest scenery. Nothing so natural and fresh had appeared in our literature. Even Bloomfield failed to convey so happy an idea of country life as Miller. One morning I inquired his address, and determined to call on Mr. Miller, trusting to the frankness and amiability which pervaded every page of his book, for the excuse of my introducing myself to him. I had a long walk down St. George's Road, Southwark, on a dismal, drizzling November day, and that was no joke, as any one familiar with a foggy day, at that time of the year, in London, can testify. After much inquiry, I found out Elliot's Row, to which place I had been directed, and when I had ascertained the group of houses, in one of which the poet resided, I had great difficulty in finding out the exact dwelling. The very people who lived next door to Mr. Miller did not

know of such a person, although half literary London was ringing with his praises, and crying him up, as a newly found genius. Such is fame in the mighty metropolis !

At length, on inquiring at an humble, but neat-looking domicile, I was told, by an interesting-looking little girl, that her father (the poet) resided there. I entered, asked to see him, and presently he came down stairs.

I introduced myself, told him I had read his works, which had delighted me with their truthfulness, and much desired to see him before I left town. He very kindly shook me by the hand, and after some agreeable chat, we made an appointment to dine with each other, at a chop house in the Strand, the next day. The story of his life, which he told me on the latter occasion, was to the following effect :—

He was born on the borders of Sherwood Forest, where Robin Hood and his merry men flourished in times of old. From childhood (he was then about five or six and twenty) he had loved to wander in the green woods and lanes, and unconsciously his poetic sensibilities were thus fostered. His station in life was very humble, and at an early age he learned basket-making, by which occupation he earned a bare subsistence. He married early, and the increasing wants of a family led him to try the experiment of publishing some poems



and sketches, but, owing to want of patronage, no benefit resulted to him. He at last determined to go to London—that fancied paradise of young authors—that great reservoir of talent—too often, that grave of genius. Thither he went, leaving, for the present, his family behind, and, alighting from the stage-coach, found himself in the Strand—a stranger among thousands, with just seven shillings and sixpence in his pocket. He soon made the melancholy discovery that a stranger in London, however great may be his talents, stands but a poor chance of getting on, without the assistance of some helping hand; so, to keep body and soul together, he set to work making baskets. In this occupation he continued some time, occasionally sending some little contribution to the periodicals. At length Fortune smiled on her patient wooer. One day, whilst he was engaged in bending his osiers, he was surprised by a visit from Mr. W. H. Harrison, Editor of the “Friendship’s Offering.” That gentleman had seen one or two pieces of Miller’s, and been struck with their originality. He found him out, after much labour, and asked him to write a poem for the forthcoming volume of the “OFFERING.”

Miller told me he was so poor then that he had not pen, ink or paper; so that he got some whitey-brown paper, in which sugar had been wrapped, mixed up some soot with water for his ink, and

then sat down—the back of a bellows serving for a desk—and wrote his well-known lines on an “Old Fountain.” These beautiful verses being completed, he sealed his letter with some moistened bread for a wafer, and forwarded them, with many hopes and fears, to the editor. They were immediately accepted, and Mr. Harrison forwarded the poet two guineas for them. “I never had been so rich in my life before,” said the basket-maker to me, “and I fancied some one would hear of my fortune and try to rob me of it; so, at night, I barred the door and went to bed, but did not sleep all night, from delight and fear.” Miller still, to his honour, continued the certain occupation of basket-making, but he was noticed by many—amongst others, by Lady Blessington, who sent for him, recommended his book, and did him substantial service. “Often,” said Miller, “have I been sitting in Lady Blessington’s splendid drawing-room in the morning, talking and laughing as familiarly as in the old house at home; and on the same evening, I might have been seen standing on Westminster Bridge, between an apple-vender and a baked-potato merchant, vending my baskets.”

Miller now tried his hand at a novel, “Royston Gower,” which succeeded well, and then another, “Fair Rosamond”; he read diligently at the British Museum, and was perseveringly industrious. Jerdan took him by the hand, and he contributed a

good deal to the Literary Gazette. He is, at the time I write, himself a publisher in Newgate street, London. Miller is rather below the middle height, his face is round and rosy looking, and he wears a profusion of light hair. He has a strong Nottinghamshire dialect, and possesses little or none of the awkwardness of a countryman. Next to William and Mary Howitt, he is the best writer on rural matters in England.

There is a quick footfall, or rather a series of them, on the stairs—and Theodore Hook enters. But as I have arrived at the point to which I have limited myself, in each chapter, I shall postpone the conclusion of the "Rogers's Breakfast" until my next.

## CHAPTER X.

A MORNING PARTY AT SAMUEL ROGERS'S  
(CONTINUED).

Hook was at that time beginning to "*break*," as it is called. His hair had, in a great measure, fallen off from his temples, and the short curly locks were thickly streaked with grey; but the brilliancy of his eye was undimmed, and scarcely any of its fire was quenched. He was not, however, so elastic in his movements as he had been, even about a twelvemonth before, when I had met him at one of the Literary Fund dinners. All that time he was editing the "*John Bull*" newspaper, and employed too, in occasionally contributing to some of the magazines. The work of the newspaper was by no means heavy, but his time was so taken up in visiting his noble friends and admirers, that he too often neglected the necessary work of the journal, until the latter end of the

week, when he was compelled to write with railroad speed, and often carelessly, to the great peril of his brilliant reputation. It was no uncommon thing, at this time, for Hook to leave a pleasant party at the house of one of his patrons, far in the country, on Friday evening, post rapidly some score of miles to London, write off his articles in the "John Bull" office, during the night, and return to the house of his host by breakfast time the next morning. During all this period of hard work, (for his necessities compelled his pen to be incessantly going,) he appeared the same light-hearted, dashing, care-for-naught, reckless man of the world as ever. Scarcely a day passed without his appearing in some party, as its most attractive star, and certain circles were deemed incomplete, unless they were graced by his fascinating presence. Perhaps, there never existed a more general favourite in a certain class of society, than Theodore Hook. He was always delightful, and never coarse. His wit played round, and lighted up every subject which engaged his attention, and so varied were his acquirements, that he seemed the very Admirable Crichton of his day.

Mr. D'Israeli, in his last and most profound novel, "Coningsby," has admirably hit off the character of Hook, under the assumed name of Lucian Gray, and to that work I would refer the reader, who may be anxious to learn more of the

author of "Sayings and Doings." Poor Hook!—Not many years after the time to which I am now more especially referring, whilst the world was yet ringing with his praises, he lay hopelessly on a sick-bed, with poverty staring him in the face. To the last degree careless about money matters, he had made no provision for the evil day; and as is generally the case, his butterfly friends, who had enjoyed his society whilst it was worth having, left the dying wit to pass alone through the weary hours of sickness.

A great deal has been said about Hook's power of extemporaneous song-making. It was indeed wonderful:

" Rhyming to him was no more difficle,  
Than to a blackbird 't was to whistle."

I was once present at a party of which Hook made one. There were upwards of fifty present, all of whom were connected with literature; it was at the house of a gentleman at Brompton, who was then the editor of one of the leading weekly critical journals. Late in the evening, after the bottle had circulated pretty freely, toasts and songs were the order of the night, and Hook was called on to contribute his quota to the evening's amusement. He rattled off an extemporaneous song, the third line of each stanza ending with the

name of some individual of the party ; in the fourth line he brought in a rhyme to the name, and often so unexpectedly ludicrous were some of the allusions made, that each sally was received with bursts of obstreperous mirth. There was not a single person in the room who escaped his running fire—the very servants were included, and trifling incidents which occurred during the singing of the song were seized hold of and turned to account. It certainly was a wonderful effort of genius ; for, in many of the verses, great poetic power was exhibited. How I wished that a stenographer had been present. Some one has said that had Hook's productions of this kind *only* been committed to paper, just as they fell from his lips, and published, without the least alteration, they would have exceeded, in quantity and quality, his published works, and secured to him a brilliant reputation. Thus, however, was much of his time frittered away.

A breakfast party was not exactly the sort of thing to bring Theodore out ; his genius required, for its full developement, the flashing aid of wax candles, and the incessant fire of champagne corks. I do not mean to say that he could not be attractive over congou or hyson ; but all who knew him will agree with me in saying that Theodore Hook, in the morning and evening, were, apparently, the opposites of each other. At all times he was fasci-

nating ; but it was when he was surrounded by choice spirits, and he had for a time flung care to the winds, that his powers of enchaining all within the sound of his voice, were most potent.

Amongst the guests was a gentleman who has created a new school of literature, by making the "Newgate Calendar" his text-book : for Mr. W. Harrison Ainsworth seems to have taken especial delight in dishing up for his readers chronicles of crime, and records of rascality.

Ainsworth and George Cruikshank, appropriately enough, entered the apartment together. I say appropriately enough, because they were so intimately connected with each other, as author and artist, that they had, to the public eye, been for some time *Siamesed*. Ainsworth looked much like the portrait of him, prefixed to one of his recent volumes. . He is strikingly handsome, his profile is well cut, and his upper lip has much of that regular curve which we see in some of the Byron portraits. His eye is very dark, and piercing rather than brilliant. It is evident that he takes great pains with his hair, which is of jet black, and falls in little ringlets, not altogether natural, I guess, down his neck. His dress was in the very height of fashion—so much so, as to appear somewhat foppish ; and he sported an abundance of trinkets. Ainsworth's manners were by no means easy, and formed quite a contrast to



those of Hook, which were marked with peculiar grace.

Who has not heard of George Cruikshank? The humorous, ever-toiling, indefatigable George? Some years since, a sketch of this inimitable caricaturist appeared in "Frazer's Magazine," where he was represented seated on a cask, and sketching on a piece of paper, placed on the crown of his hat. It was much like him; but as many of my readers may neither have seen that drawing nor the original, I will try to describe him, as he appeared that morning at Rogers's.

Cruikshank is tall, and rather lanky in person; his head is well shaped, and his face very expressive, but pale and thin. His grey eyes are piercing, and ever moving, or when they do rest on any object, seem at once to look *through* it. He has lightish coloured hair, (which he wears carefully combed back, so as to leave his right temple, which is high and well developed, exposed,) and also enormous whiskers. He sports moustachios of a very peculiar cut, which gives to his visage a half-martial appearance. At first sight, most persons would take him for a foreigner; many suppose that he whose comic sketches had so often moved their risible muscles, has something of the humorous in his physiognomical aspect. Such is not the case—he looks more like a Cynic than a comic illustrator. There is a sort of severe expres-

sion in his countenance, which at times is almost forbidding.

I did not get any opportunity of being near him, so that I could not listen to his conversation; but I have heard that he is usually taciturn, and almost morose. I was told that he is seldom to be seen in society; and when we consider the vast amount of work which he gets through, this may easily be credited. For years past he has illustrated the best comic works which have appeared; and not only has he surpassed all others in his own peculiar line, but he has shown that in serious, and even tragic subjects, he is a master of his art. In proof of this, I need only to refer the reader to some of his illustrations in "Oliver Twist," especially that striking one of Fagin, in the condemned cell.

Whilst I was looking at Cruikshank, a gentleman of sombre look entered the room. He was clad in a suit of plain black, and in his deportment seemed diffident, even to shyness. There was but little about him to fix attention, save an expression of great kindness about his mouth. His eyes were really dull-looking, and his forehead, which was thinly covered with light hair, was by no means of an intellectual cast. Nevertheless, there was a certain *something* attractive about him, which engaged my attention, and made me anxious to know who he was.

Coleridge, by this time, was deep in talk with

Mr. Sharon Turner, a feeble-looking, elderly gentleman, who is well known to every true lover of solid literature, as the "Middle Ages" author; and I did not venture to disturb him, for the purpose of inquiring who the new comer was; but observing Leigh Hunt leaning with his elbow on the marble mantel-piece, and having, before that morning, had the pleasure of introduction to him, I crossed the room, and learned from him that the gentleman who had so excited my curiosity was Mr. Bryan Waller Proctor—better known by his assumed name of BARRY CORNWALL, the author of, amongst many other productions, "The Sea."

Mr. Proctor, it may not be generally known, is a member of the legal profession, and occupies chambers in one of the inns of court, where he practises in the unpoetical vocation of a conveyancer. Hunt kindly introduced me to him—and I was as much charmed with his urbanity and affability as I had previously been with his poetry. He told me that he was a "stay-at-home man," and asked me to call on him at his chambers—an invitation which I accepted before I left London, and to which I may hereafter refer.

Mr. Sergeant Talfourd sat near me, and as I had met him frequently, whilst on the Oxford Circuit, we were soon chatting familiarly together. The author of "Ion," is one of the most amiable men I ever knew, and never did any literary man enjoy,

in a fuller degree, the esteem and admiration of his brother labourers in the same field. His face is not handsome, but it is indicative of great sweetness of disposition. His dark eyes glow with sensibility, and were not the lower portion of his face rather too full, its expression would be what is termed "sweet." Talfourd is a most industrious man; and I remarked to him, that I wondered how he could get through so much legal business, and yet have time to woo the Muse. He replied, that he had need work hard, as he had the mouths of thirteen children to feed. As an advocate, Mr. Talfourd stands very high, and he is a general favourite with the Bar. His eloquence is rather of a persuasive character, and he elicits truth none the less effectually for using gentle means. It is really astonishing that he can, as he does, divest his mind of all the technicalities of law, and produce poetry of such beauty; but so it is. I remember being told by a tradesman of Monmouth, in whose house Mr. Talfourd used to lodge, when on the Oxford Circuit, that he would often listen at Mr. T——'s door, after Court hours, to hear him, as he walked up and down the room, recite poetry—it being Mr. Talfourd's habit to compose aloud, as he paces the room. The listener (a tailor), with quite an enthusiastic tone, assured me "it was beautiful to hear him."

Mr. Thomas Babington Macaulay, the celebrated

reviewer, made one of the party. He is about the middle age, with a countenance fully indicative of the great powers which are universally ascribed to him. I saw but little of him, for he joined a group who were turning over a portfolio of water-colour drawings, and he left immediately after breakfast, unnoticed by me.

There was a good sprinkling of painters present, for Mr. Rogers is a munificent patron of the fine Arts. Unlike many who have wealth at their disposal, he, as may be readily supposed, possesses an exquisite taste: he is, indeed, fastidious, almost to a fault. When he resolved, some few years ago, on publishing a new edition of his Poems, he determined on having them illustrated in a style which should be superior to anything of the kind which had ever appeared before. He, therefore, commissioned Turner, Corbould, Creswick, Stothard, and others, to make a series of designs for the work. These celebrated painters sent in each a number of water-colour drawings, of the choicest kind; but so particular was Mr. Rogers, that, from twenty or thirty, by an artist, he would select, perhaps, but one, although he paid liberally for the whole. And even after he had expended a large sum on the engraving of the chosen drawing, he would frequently alter his mind—cancel the plate, and have fresh designs made, until his taste or fancy was gratified. Money, to a man who could hang up

a million of money in his library, was, of course, no object; and he had determined that his verses should go down to posterity, associated with all that was beautiful and refined in Art. This work, it was said, cost Mr. Rogers, (for he undertook to pay the publisher the whole of the expenses, which no tradesman would have had the boldness to risk, however enterprising he might be,) about ten thousand pounds! and it will always remain as a memento of his wealth, genius, and taste.

Perhaps the most distinguished painter present was the late Sir David Wilkie. Wilkie was rather tall in stature, and his face indicated his Caledonian origin. There was a sedateness and shrewdness withal in his light grey eye—nothing brilliant, indeed; on the contrary, he would scarcely have attracted attention, had he not been so widely known and appreciated as the painter of *The Blind Fiddler*. His dress was remarkably unpretending in its style, and he looked more like a substantial tradesman than a man of fine and original genius. He was very silent, and, in this respect, the opposite of Chantrey, who sat near him, chatting familiarly with each and every one who came in his way.

Nor did Chantrey *look* the great man he assuredly was. His habits of high living had made his frame gross and corpulent. His cheeks were puffed out; and it required some stretch of the imagination to

feel that the rather thick and clumsy hands which I saw, were those which had modelled the exquisite statues of The Sleeping Children, in Litchfield Cathedral, or the wonderful Brace of Birds which are, and will be, whilst genius shall be revered, such ornithological stony triumphs, at the late Earl of Leicester's seat, at Holkham.

Had Sir Francis been less of a *gourmond*, he might now have been alive; but, unfortunately, his epicurism brought on a diseased habit of body, and rendered it unable to withstand the shocks which incessant application rendered it subject to. He died not long afterward, in his chair, whilst at dinner, and partaking of one of his favourite dishes.

Honest Allan Cunningham accompanied Chantrey. Every one knows that "Honest Allan," as Sir Walter Scott called him, was Chantrey's assistant. Cunningham was a tall, stout Scot, and looked more like a bluff farmer, fresh from the Grampians, than a poet. I never saw a man so devoid of affectation, as he. When I was presented to him, for the first time, in Chantrey's studio, he gripped my hand in his monstrous bony fist, and squeezed it till I thought it had got into a vice; but it was a grasp of the right earnest sort. Chantrey was frequently more indebted to Cunningham for advice, with respect to his statues, than is generally known, and the great sculptor freely

acknowledged this ; but Allan, with a fine generosity, never would admit it. Poor Cunningham ! he did not long survive his friend and patron ; both are now subjects for “monumental marble” themselves.

“Who is that very thoughtful looking personage, talking with Talfourd ?” I asked of Thomas Miller.

“That,” he replied, “is Samuel Warren, the author of the celebrated ‘Diary of a late Physician,’ which appeared in Blackwood, some time since.”

Mr. Warren was anything but brilliant-looking ; indeed, he had that sort of face which may be called “heavy.” Still it was of a very thoughtful cast, and the high and broad forehead indicated powers of a very superior order. He seemed to be remarkably shy and retiring, and I noticed that, during the whole morning, he seldom exchanged a word with any one but the author of “Ion.”

It may not be generally known that Mr. Warren is a son of Doctor Warren, once a Wesleyan Minister of Manchester—but now a Clergyman of the Church of England ; he is by profession a barrister, and travels on the Northern Circuit. His profession furnishes him with abundance of material, and a late tale of surpassing interest, in Blackwood’s Magazine, entitled “We are all low people there—A Tale of the Assizes,” from his pen, is a proof of his tact in seizing on



every day topics, and converting them into subjects of deep interest.

Mr. Warren was originally intended for the medical profession, and studied in the hospitals—a circumstance which accounts for the intimate acquaintance with professional matters, which is evinced in his “Physician’s Diary.” It is a curious circumstance connected with these papers, that they were offered to, and successively rejected by, nearly all the leading English Magazines, and thrown aside by the author as useless. A friend of Warren’s persuaded him to offer them to Professor Wilson, and he sent them anonymously. They were accepted, and at once became popular. But it was not until many papers of the series had been before the public, that the editor knew his correspondent. He afterwards wrote “Caleb Stukely;” “and rumour ascribes “Marston, or the Memoirs of a Statesman,” now publishing in “Old Ebony,” to his pen ; but I question much whether Warren is the author, and have good reasons for my doubts on the subject.

At this distance of time I cannot call to mind half of the noticeable people who thronged Mr. Rogers’s saloons that morning ; for, after the business of tea and coffee sipping had been concluded, there was a continual in-coming and out-going of persons, most of them “men of mark.”

Hook, and a group of laughing companions, got

together as usual in one of the ante-rooms, and the popping of champagne corks, mingling with short and merry laughter, proclaimed that he was in full fire. A champagne breakfast was much more to the taste of him and his circle, than that composed of less exciting fluids. I longed to be near them, to listen to some good things which doubtless were flying about: but Coleridge, who was somewhat feeble, was leaning on my arm, and I had no opportunity, (I am ashamed, almost, to say that I felt any inclination,) of quitting him.

James Smith, with his frank, good-humoured face, was a prominent attraction in the party. He was then, as indeed he always was, in his latter days, suffering from his inveterate foe, the gout. This confined him to his chair, which, being placed on castors, was wheeled about by a footman from one table to another. He seemed in excellent spirits, and kept all about him in good humour, with his racy stories. I never beheld such an instance of the features retaining their kindly expression, whilst that torturing disease racked the frame, as in the case of James Smith; he appeared to reject its addresses, *in toto*.

There were amongst the artists present, Martin, Turner, Etty, and Maclise, and also a young artist named Muller, who, I see by the recent notice of the Royal Academy Exhibition, is at present attracting considerable notice, in consequence of

his picture of "A Dance at Zanthus." Martin is a little, common-place-looking man, and would not seem to a casual observer to have an atom of poetry in his composition, and yet what magnificent designs he produces. His paintings are far inferior in *effect* to the engravings from them, which he himself executes. His water colour drawings are wonderful, and some of them far superior to any public productions of his pencil. He is in the habit, I am told, of laying on his canvass *masses* of paint, of different colours, and then producing, from *chance* efforts, some of his most wonderful pictures. I know not how true this may be, but at all events it is not at all unlikely. It is a strange thing enough, connected with his family history, that whilst he should delight in portraying magnificent edifices, his own brother should have nearly destroyed one of our most splendid ecclesiastical edifices, York Minster; Jonathan Martin having, during a fit of insanity, set fire to that venerable pile, and partially destroyed it, some years since.

Daniel Maclise, another Royal Academician, was a smart-looking fellow. He seemed quite young. His face was handsome, and his manners refined. He strolled about the room with Turner—a stout plain-looking man—although the most poetical of our painters; perhaps I should say *was* the most poetical—for I regret to add, that, of late

years, his imagination has run riot. His recent productions are, many of them, positive absurdities, and would not be tolerated, if they were the work of any other hand.\*

Amongst the literati present, I must not omit to mention one, who certainly is one of the most, if not *the* most, prolific writer of the age. I allude to Mr. James.

His personal appearance is by no means striking—rather beneath the middle size. His frame is far from graceful—but the expression of his countenance is calm and prepossessing. I should think him a very amiable man—industrious he certainly is. How he can possibly turn out novels at the rate he does, is a mystery—and, in the end, he *must* inevitably suffer by it—for his genius is not of so high an order as to endure such repeated draughts on it. In society, he is generally reserved and sedate—but, I was told, he seldom leaves his study. In private life, no man is more respected. I had a brief conversation with him, in the course of which he informed me that he frequently dictated two novels at once, to two amanuensis. I question whether such a course is likely to benefit him, in the long run.

The party began to break up about twelve o'clock—somewhat later, I was informed, than

\* Since this sketch was written, we regret to say the above celebrated painter has ceased to exist.

usual. Mr. Rogers invited several, Coleridge amongst the rest, to return to a late dinner, but the "Ancient Mariner" declined, somewhat to my mortification, for I should like to have accompanied him, and witnessed a literary evening in that splendid mansion. But it was not to be, and so we departed—Coleridge seeming gratified with the many attentions which had been shown, and myself delighted at having had the opportunity of meeting many of whom I had previously heard so much. Long, very long, will the events of that morning, ephemeral though they were, be classed amongst *my* "Pleasures of Memory."

## CHAPTER XI.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

THE first time I ever saw James Montgomery, was on the occasion of his presiding at a public anniversary meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. As he proceeded down the aisle of the chapel, towards the platform, I had no difficulty whatever in distinguishing the "Christian Poet," as he is termed, from the crowd of gentlemen by whom he was surrounded, owing to the resemblance he bore to the many portraits of him which I have seen. Amidst much cheering, he took his place in the seat of honour, and I had then a good opportunity of observing him.

And I looked at him with no little interest, for his sweet and touching poetry had been familiar to me from my childhood. He appeared of the middle height, or a trifle under it, and his dress was plain black ; indeed, he would have been taken by most

persons for a clergyman. Over a high and well-formed forehead, were combed some thin locks of hair, the colour of which must have, at one time, approached to a sandy hue, but which now was of a yellowish grey colour; the upper portion of his forehead was nearly bald; his eyes were deep set, of a light colour, and not particularly expressive or lustrous; the nose was long, and slightly aquiline, and his mouth small, and by no means well formed. A large white cravat enveloped his neck, and almost buried his chin in its ample folds. The prevailing expression of his features was of a very pensive character—almost, indeed, of sadness; and in this respect he presented a very marked contrast to the pert and perking appearance of his namesake, Robert.

Mr. Montgomery opened the meeting with a few rather common-place observations. His voice was thin, weak, and very tremulous; and his action by no means graceful. It might be that I had wound up my expectations to too high a pitch, or that the subject on which he spoke was not calculated to display his peculiar powers; but the truth is, I was much disappointed. The speech was any thing but what I expected from the author of the "Pelican Island."

On the evening of the day on which the meeting to which I have referred was held, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Montgomery at the house of

a mutual friend. In the social circle he was delightful. There was nothing of the "I am a Poet," about him ; but he entered freely and familiarly into conversation, and expressed his opinions on the literature of the day with as much diffidence as if he had himself only worshipped the Muse "afar off." I remember the conversation turning on Mrs. Hemans's poetry, which he considered to be the perfection of musical verse—the lines chiming, as he remarked, like the silver bells in "fairy lands." I asked him which he considered to be the most powerful of her minor pieces, and after hesitating a minute, he replied, "I think nothing can surpass, in simple grandeur, and almost perfect beauty, her Hymn to the "Mountain Winds," commencing with

"Mountain Winds ! O whither would ye bear me ?"

He said he had received from Mrs. Hemans some of the most delightful letters which mortal ever penned ; and remarked, "Ah, Sir ! that woman has always appeared to me to have been a ready made angel." He told us several anecdotes of Mrs. Hemans, whom he once visited at St. Asaph.

Amongst the company present that evening, and who had been invited for the express purpose of meeting Mr. Montgomery, was a lady, who has for many years been known in literary circles, and



was then, residing with her brother, Dr. Porter, a physician practising in Bristol. I allude to Miss Jane Porter.

The authoress of "Thaddeus of Warsaw" was a very tall, very thin, very pale, and very old-maidish looking lady; but in conversation she was one of the most sprightly and agreeable persons I ever knew. Like Hannah More, she was full of anecdotes of the literary people who had flourished during the last half century, and with many of whom she had associated; for Miss Porter was an ancient lady, as may be readily supposed, when we refer to the dates of her first productions. She gave us a very interesting account of her visit to Walter Scott, and of Kosciusko's visit to her, when she was in Bristol. She described the latter as a man of plain manners, but of indomitable energy, and she evidently felt proud of the compliment he had paid her.

I afterwards heard Mr. Montgomery deliver a course of lectures on English Poetry. When they were announced, a great sensation was created; for it was naturally supposed that, from a poet, we should have a brilliant exposition of his theme. They were delivered in the theatre of one of the great London institutions, and were well attended; but their success was by no means commensurate with the literary repute of the lecturer. Mr. Montgomery is not adapted by nature for a public

lecturer. There was a tremulous monotony in his tones, which induced a listlessness on the part of his auditory ; and although now and then the true poet burst forth in a blaze of exceeding beauty, yet the flashes were meteoric and transient. On the whole, these lectures were a failure ; but their want of success might perhaps be more justly attributable to the style of their delivery, than to any glaring defects in the subject matter itself.

My next personal recollection of James Montgomery is connected with a visit which I paid to Olney, the sometime residence of the poet Cowper.

In the summer of 1838, I was on a fly-fishing excursion, in the neighbourhood of that place, and hearing from the postman, who brought letters to our party from the post-office to our country quarters, that the poet Montgomery was there, myself and a friend, who had never seen him, took a walk to Olney, the next day, to call on him. We inquired for Mr. M ———, but no one seemed to be aware of his whereabouts ; and, as a last resource, we went to the post-office, where we were informed that he would, most likely, be found at *Squire* Cowper's school. To this place we proceeded. It was a dwelling which Cowper had once tenanted, and ever since it had been used as a village school, and called by his name. There we found *Montgomery*, surrounded by the children, who were

singing that beautiful hymn of the bard of Olney, commencing with

“God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.”

I had heard this beautiful hymn sung hundreds of times, but never with such effect as in that room, the very place in which, we are told, and there is every reason to suppose with truth, that Cowper composed it.

Montgomery received us very kindly, and we visited together some of Cowper's favourite spots. It was highly gratifying to repair to such hallowed retreats, in the company of one who has not been unaptly called the Cowper of our own time. On leaving, Montgomery kindly invited me to call on him, should I ever visit Sheffield, which I gladly promised to do.

About two years afterwards, I was in that busy mart; and, remembering the poet's invitation, I determined to avail myself of it. I had no difficulty in finding my way to “The Mount,” the name of his residence, and was fortunate enough to find him at home. We had a pleasant talk together, and after dinner, he accompanied me to the Literary Institutions of the neighbourhood, and it was quite delightful to observe with what marked respect he was everywhere received. I

noticed this to him, and I said he must feel highly gratified by it. "I am, of course," he replied, "but I have enemies. Not long since, some rascals broke into my house, one Sunday, whilst I was delivering an address at a chapel in Sheffield, (Mr. Montgomery sometimes preaches amongst his own people—the Moravians,) and stole, amongst other things, a silver inkstand, which had been given me by the ladies of Sheffield. However," he added, "the loss was but for a time, and proved to be the occasion of the greatest compliment which, in my opinion, I ever had paid me. A few days after my loss, a box came directed to me, and, on opening it, lo! there was, uninjured, the missing inkstand, and a note, in which the writer expressed his regret that he had entered my house, and abstracted it. The thief said his mother had taught him some of my verses, when he was a boy, and, on seeing my name on the inkstand, he first became aware whose house he had robbed, and was so stung with remorse, that he could not rest until he had restored my property, hoping God would forgive him."

On our way back to his house, our conversation turned on the poems of the Corn Law Rhymer, of which Mr. Montgomery spoke in very high terms, but deprecated his violence of language. "Would you like to see Elliott?" he asked.

"Much," said I.

“ Well, he lives some three miles from here, at Uppertorpe ; but he is to speak to-night, at a Corn Law Meeting, in Sheffield ; and, if you like, after tea, we’ll go and hear him, and I’ll introduce you to him.”

At the time specified we set out. The place where the lecture was to be delivered was situated in one of the most densely inhabited portions of the smoky town of Sheffield. As we entered the hall, groups of dark-looking, unwashed artizans were seen, proceeding in the same direction as ourselves, all of them engaged in deep and earnest conversation on the then one great subject—THE CORN LAWS. Strong men, as they hurried by, clenched their hands, and knitted their brows, and ground their teeth, as they muttered imprecations on those whom they considered to be their oppressors. Here we would encounter a crowd of dusky forms, circling around a pale, anxious man, who was reading, by the light of a gas-lamp, a speech reported in “ The Northern Star,” or the last letter of Publicola, in “ The Weekly Dispatch ;” and women, with meagre children in their arms, children *drugged* to a death-like sleep, by that curse of the manufacturing districts of England—*laudanum*, disguised as Godfrey’s cordial, were raising their shrill, shrewish voices, and execrating the laws which ground them to the dust ; and there were fierce denunciations from mere boys, and treason-

able speeches from young men ; old men, with half-paralysed energies, moaned and groaned, and said they had never known such times ; all seemed gaunt and fierce, and ripe for revolt. It was an audience of working men—of such as these—that Ebenezer Elliott was to address that evening.

The lecturing hall was crammed with the working classes ; and as the orator of the evening mounted the rostrum, a wild burst of applause rung from every part of the house. He bowed slightly, smiled sternly, and took a seat, whilst a hymn, which he had composed for the occasion, was roared forth by hundreds of brazen lungs.

He was a man rather under than above what is termed the middle height. Like the class from whence he sprung, and which he was about to address, he was dressed in working clothes—clothes plain even to coarseness. He had a high, broad, very intellectual forehead, with rough ridges on the temples, from the sides and summit of which, thick stubby hair was brushed up ; streaks of grey mingled with the coarse black hair ; his eyebrows were dark and thick, and shaded two large, deeply-set, glaring eyes, which rolled every way, and seemed to survey the whole of that vast assembly at a glance. His nasal organ was, as it were, *grafted* on his face : and the lines, from the angles of the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, were deeply indented—graven in. A very black beard lately

shaven, made his chin and neck appear as if 'twas covered with dots, and he had a thick, massive throat. His figure was indicative of great muscular strength, and his big horny fists seemed more fitted to wield the sledge-hammer than to flourish a pen. Looking at him, the most casual observer would be impressed with the idea that no common man was before him.

He rose amidst great cheering, and for an hour and a half held that great audience in entire subjection by one of the most powerful addresses I ever listened to. With a terrible distinctness he painted the situation of the working man: he showed what he might have been, and contrasted his possible and probable situation with what it then was. On the heads of those who opposed Free Trade, the Corn Law Rhymer poured out all the vials of his wrath; but vigorous and forcible as was his language, there was no coarseness; and frequently, over the landscape which he had painted with all the wild force of a Spagnoletti or a Carravaggio, he flung a gleam of sunshine, which made the moral wilderness he had created, to rejoice and blossom as the rose. And there were passages in his speech, of such extreme pathos, that strong men would bow down and weep, like little children; to these would succeed such sledge-hammer denunciations, that his hearers sat with compressed lips, and glaring eyes, and resolute

hearts. When he sat down, after an appeal to the justice of the Law Makers, the whole audience burst into one loud cheer, and those near the speaker gripped his hand in fierce delight. I never saw such a scene, nor could I have conceived it possible that one working man should have so carried with him the passions and feelings of an audience consisting entirely of those of his own class.

Montgomery introduced me to Elliott, and we all three walked to the house of the former together. How different from the man on the platform was the man in the parlour. No longer the fervid orator, he was now the simple, placid poet; and I never, before or since, heard from mortal lips such powerful, and yet pleasant criticisms, on our literary men, as I did that night from the lips of Elliott. He spoke with great enthusiasm of Southey, whom he revered, despite his politics, and whom he called his "great master in the art of poetry." He had much reverence for Wordsworth; but I must not attempt to record the conversation. Suffice it to say, that after an hour's chat our party of three broke up; one of them, at least, not a little gratified with the events of the evening.

And thus end my reminiscences of the Bard of Sheffield.



## CHAPTER XII.

ELIZA COOK ; WITH A PEEP AT A POPULAR ACTRESS.

IN these days of myths and mysteries, when one person writes a book to prove that no such person as Shakspeare ever existed, and another a pamphlet to convince the world that salt is not only useless, but is the fertile source of all the diseases to which humanity is subject, it can scarcely be wondered at that the positive existence, in a flesh-and-blood point of view, of such a personage as Miss Eliza Cook, should be a matter of serious doubt. Yet, in spite of a very substantial and portly-looking portrait, which constitutes the chief ornament of many a public-house parlour, such is actually the case ; and I was very gravely assured, not a month since, by a gentleman who professed to be on terms of intimate acquaintance with nearly all the literary lions of the day, from Thomas Babington Macaulay

down to Mr. G. W. M. Reynolds, that the author of "The Old Arm-Chair" was a gentleman !

That, however, such a person as Miss Eliza Cook does actually "live, move, and have her being" in the circle of authorcraft, is an undoubted fact ; and as the lady has made herself highly popular amongst a certain class of readers, who do not care for "high art" in poetry, but are content to have commonplace subjects dished up for their not over-fastidious palates, in pretty smooth rhyme, I have reserved for her a niche in my gallery of pen-and-ink portraits.

To say that Miss Cook is not a poetess of the first class, is, I am quite aware, little less than high treason in the opinion of her numerous admirers, who would place her on a level with, if not above, such writers as Joanna Baillie, Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Norton, Miss Landon, or Miss Browning.

That Miss Cook has produced some catching verses is not to be denied ; and that she has the tact to write on every-day subjects in a simple flowery rhyme all will admit ; but that she is entitled to more than a simply respectable place among the poetesses of England, the best judges on such subjects will deny. The talent which would invest a pair of "red shoes" with a passing interest, or which might embellish a poker, is not exactly of that kind which will confer immortality on its possessor.

But, perhaps some of my readers will prefer a personal sketch to a criticism, and would rather peruse a description of Miss Cook's face, figure, and dress, than an opinion on her productions.— Well, then, although not versed in the mysteries of muslin, and unused to sketch boddices and bustles, I will do my best to describe the late laureate of the "Dispatch," as she really is.

I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss Cook many times, in various circles. The first time I saw her was at a dinner party, in the house of a West End publisher. I had arrived at the house of Mr. P—— before her, and was not aware that she was to be of the party, until, nearly all the other guests having arrived, a thundering rap was heard at the street-door, and immediately afterwards, three ladies entered the room, and were announced as Miss Cook and the Misses Cushman.

The names of the latter ladies were familiar enough, for they were performers of the respective parts of Romeo and Juliet, at the Haymarket Theatre: the name of Eliza Cook was equally well known, and the three ladies became at once the central objects of attraction.

Miss Cook's appearance was somewhat singular: her hair was arranged in an indescribable manner, and therefore the reader must refer to the portrait of the lady for a correct idea of it. It was, as an old gentleman remarked, with a toss of his chin,

"frightfully man-ish." It was a hot summer's evening, but she was attired in a plaid dress, of a flaming red pattern, edged with sable. Her face was plump and pleasant-looking, the forehead bulging out, the eyes large and swimming, the nose large, and the mouth tolerably well-formed and expressive; a double chin gave rather a heavy appearance to the lower part of the face. Without at all intending to be impertinent, I must add, that there was an I don't-care anything-for-you sort of expression on her countenance, combined with a certain shrewdness, which told, plainly as words could speak, that the owner of the countenance was a remarkably clever lady. And so she is, as the admirable manner in which she conducts her "Journal" convinces us.

I had the pleasure of sitting near Miss Cook at table, and was highly delighted with her conversation. There was one great charm in it, an utter absence of affectation—of which we too often see so much among literary, especially young literary people. Whenever she spoke, she spoke to the purpose, and like a far-seeing woman of the world. To mock-modesty she was evidently a stranger, and her manner, if not remarkably refined, was at least lady-like. It is greatly to her credit, that the puffing system has not had the effect of turning her head, and spoiling her, as is too often the case with writers who do not possess so much

energy and decision of character as the subject of our sketch.

Miss Cook and Miss Cushman are and were, almost as constantly together as the Siamese twins ; and as I chanced to see them in each other's company, a slight sketch of the American actress, as well as of her friend, may be acceptable.

Some one tells an anecdote of Mrs. Siddons, who—dramatic even at the dinner-table—on one occasion sent a foot-boy, who had brought her a glass of water, into fits, by exclaiming, in a tragedy voice, and with a Lady Macbeth air—

“ You brought me water, boy—I asked for beer !”

Miss Cushman was almost equally stilted in company. She sat at table shifty and studiously, and spoke measuredly. You could not divest yourself of the idea of the actress, whilst looking at her. The likeness to Macready, when she was “made up” on the stage, vanished in the dining-room ; and the “talented young actress” appeared very much like a very old young lady. The large cavernous hollows in which her eyes were situated, the small nose, the large mouth, and lengthened, projecting chin, looked terribly un-Romanish ; in short, I am compelled, in spite of politeness, to admit that, as I looked at her, I remembered how different she looked on the stage ; that, indeed,

“'Twas distance lent enchantment to the view.”

Miss Charlotte Cushman, her sister, was a pretty young woman, and made a very decent “Juliet;” but she looked—unlike her sister—better in the drawing-room than on the stage; and the stage, I believe, she has quitted, having married a gentleman of considerable property in this country.

## CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM THOM, THE WEAVER POET OF INVERBURY.

THE sad story of some unfortunate child of genius, who through his whole life has had

“ To wage with Fortune an unequal war,”

has frequently been told. Familiar to all readers must be the histories and fates of Savage, Dermody, Otway, Chatterton, and of many others, who

“ Learned in suffering what they taught in song.”

But how little do we imagine, as we tread our daily paths, that, perhaps, our coat brushes against some unfortunate, who, at the present moment, is enduring similar misery. The day of poetical adversity is not yet gone by, as a perusal of the following record will sufficiently prove:—

It was in a log-cabin, in the back woods of Canada, that I first became acquainted with the

writings of William Thom. My host, at that time, was a Scotchman, who had emigrated from the neighbourhood of Dundee, many years before. Just before I became acquainted with him, by claiming his forest hospitality, when on a tramping excursion, he had paid a visit to Montreal, and there had purchased, among other books, for he was a great reader, the volume of Thom's, which was published by Smith and Elder, in, I think, the year 1844. The frontispiece was a likeness of the poet and his son, engraved from a Daguerreotype. That did not so much interest me; but the intensely pathetic narrative of the poet's wanderings and sufferings, the terribly touching story of his child's death, and of the loss of his wife, powerfully affected me, and created a strong interest in the poems which followed. These I read, and re-read, and so did my Scotch friend, who, in the warmth of his heart, filled a bumper of genuine Ferintosh to the better fortunes of the poet. At that time, I little thought that I should ever see the bard of Inverury.

Scarcely more than six months had elapsed, when, after an extensive tour in the western wilds, I once more visited England. Amidst a multitude of occupations, I had almost forgotten the weaver poet; but one evening, at a social party, a literary friend asked me, the course of conversation having brought up his name, if I should like to know him?



The result was, that an arrangement was made to visit him of Inverury on the following Saturday evening, and accordingly, at the appointed time, just in the "gloaming," P—— and myself proceeded on our poetical pilgrimage to Charlotte Terrace, Barnsbury-road, where Thom then resided.

I should here mention, that at this period, a change for the better had taken place in Thom's fortunes,—as though Fortune had at length grown weary of persecuting him. It appeared that one of his volumes had travelled to India, just as one had found its way to Canada. So pleased were a number of the poet's wealthy countrymen in Calcutta with it, and so keenly did they sympathise with his distresses, that they started a subscription, and raised six hundred pounds, which was transmitted to the astonished weaver. How this large sum of money proved rather injurious than beneficial to its recipient, I shall presently have occasion to show.

In reply to our tintinnabulary summons, the door of Thom's house was opened, and a pleasant looking, though somewhat loosely-attired female, with a bouncing baby in her arms, made her appearance.

"Is Mr. Thom at home?" asked P——.

"Coom in, mon, coom in," said a voice from within a parlour, the door of which was on the

left hand side of the passage ; and availing ourselves of the invitation, in we accordingly went.

The parlour was so dark, that at first I could see no one, but presently I observed a man of short stature limping towards us. P—— introduced me, and Thom, grasped my hand cordially.

“Varra glad to see ye, Mr. ——; I’ve read your buik.”

“And so have I yours, Mr. Thom, thousands of miles away, too,” I said.

“Eh! mon, but that’s curious—but set doon: Jeanie, lass, bring in some light.”

“Jeanie!” Why had I not read of Jeanie’s death in Thom’s narrative? Certainly I had. But I soon learned that Thom had wooed and won another wife, who he always addressed by the name of the first.

The candles were brought, and then I had a fair view of Thom—but how unlike was the man himself to the portrait of him prefixed to his book. In stature he was below the middle height, but his head and chest might have belonged to a man six feet high. His lower extremities were unnaturally short, and his height was still farther reduced by a deformity of one foot, produced by an accident when he was a boy. In consequence of this defect, he was very lame, and even by the aid of a short stick walked with difficulty.

His head was very striking, and indicative of

considerable intellectual power ; the forehead high, broad, and furrowed with the lines of care rather than of time, was surmounted by light tawny hair, which was tossed about in the "most admired disorder." Rather deeply set were two large light grey eyes, full of expression : the nose was long, the mouth large and coarse ; deep furrows ran from the nostrils to the angles of the mouth, and around the latter were certain indications of that great humour of which few possessed a larger stock than Thom.

In his dress he was plain ; a black frock coat, a red small-patterned waistcoat, and black and white tweed trousers completed his costume. The only article approaching to the ornamental was a gold guard chain, which was attached to a small gold watch in his waistcoat pocket.

There were one or two other parties present ; one was the sub-editor of a chartist newspaper, who had nothing but his inordinate vanity to recommend him. The others were mere hangers-on of Thom's—fellows, who, while his six hundred pounds lasted, were his dearest friends, but who left him as soon as the cash had flown. The names of such are not worth recording here.

Thom's conversational powers were great, and he quite astonished me that evening with the variety and extent of his information. The very memory of past trouble seemed to have vanished,

as he quaffed glass after glass of his favourite beverage, rum and water. Then he played, and with great taste, on his flute—the flute of his wanderings, and altogether a very “jolly” evening was spent.

With a portion of the money sent him from India, Thom, as the donors wished that he should, purchased a loom, with the intention of pursuing his business in London,—well for him if he had done so. He had, also, some elegant cards, printed in gold, but these, I believe, were distributed more as curiosities than as aids to trading; two of these he gave me when I left him, which was not until the

“Wee short hour ayont the twal.”

Very seldom does it happen that literary men are men of business; and Thom was no exception to the almost general rule. His company was courted in tavern parlours (at one house, near the Caledonian-road, his portrait was painted, by subscription, and it now hangs in the public-room), and, of course, whilst he was delighting his auditors, the shuttle flew not through the threads of the loom—that implement, in fact, was seldom if ever used. This could not last. Money took unto itself wings and flew away; friends forsook him, worse than all, his health began to fail, and just when it

became more than ever necessary that he should work, the ability to work was gone.

I lost sight of Thom for some months, after I paid him a visit at Charlotte Terrace, and when I next met him, he was residing in a small cottage, one of a row called Alpha Cottages, near Maiden-lane, King's Cross. His circumstances were sadly altered. The glossy black coat had vanished, and for it was substituted an old brown one. No longer the gold chain and gold watch betokened some degree of worldly prosperity—they had vanished. In his ill-furnished dwelling all that reminded me of the first visit I paid him was the flute—that seemed to be regarded as a household treasure. Jeannie, too, was more slovenly than ever,—only the children looked hale and well.

A great change had taken place in Thom's appearance, irrespective of his dress,—his cheeks were sunk, his eyes had lost that vivacity which once animated them, and they had that glazed bloodshot appearance, which indicates, too surely, an indulgence in ardent spirits. His frame, too, was shattered, his hand tremulous, and his step feeble; besides these, he was troubled with a harassing cough, which tried him sorely; in fact, I saw, plainly enough, that he was "breaking up."

Let it not be imagined, that I am stating these matters in order to throw obloquy on the memory

of William Thom. If any man may be excused for plunging into excesses, it must be him who, suddenly raised from the direst poverty and obscurity to affluence and fame, loses his balance and falls:—such was poor Thom's case;—he was feted and feasted,—a banquet was held in his honour, and his portrait was engraved in a pictorial paper,—he was made a lion of, in short; and, as in the case of Robert Burns, John Clare, and others I might name,—the “lionising” ruined him, and unfitted him for anything like steady application. Starvation was now staring him in the face, and, to add to the calamity, Jeannie was about to add to his already too numerous family.

One day, as I was walking along Barnsbury Road, I saw Thom, with a book in his hand, standing at the corner of a street. “I am,” said he, “waiting for a baker's man, who goes by with his cart, usually about this time. There's nothing at home for Jeannie and the bairns to eat, and I'm hoping the baker will buy my book. Eh! mon,” he added, “is'nt it hard, that I should have to peddle my book to buy a dinner.”

During the last two or three months of Thom's stay in London, his health became worse and worse. “Ah!” said he to me, one day, after a severe fit of coughing, “I must have had a cast iron constitution, to have gone through what I have:” and he was right. His appetite now was

almost entirely gone; and he mainly subsisted on rum and water, with which oatmeal was mixed. As may have been expected, such a mixture added fuel to the fire which was consuming him.

The last time I saw poor Thom, was on a fine evening in May, 1848. Happening to call on him, I found him preparing to take his children to Chalk Farm Fair. "The air will do me good," he said, and he pressed me to accompany him. I did so. He leaned heavily on my arm, with his left hand, his right grasping his short walking-stick. On arriving at the fair, he purchased some "sweeties" as he called them, for his neighbours' children; and, after a short time, feeling faint, he expressed a wish to return to his dwelling, which he did with difficulty. I bade him "good night," and we saw each other no more.

Shortly after this, a subscription was raised by some friends, and Thom returned to Scotland—to die. At Dundee, shortly after his arrival there, a festival was given in honour of the dying poet, at which he made a speech, in which he stated that, on visiting his native land, he "felt like a bird fluttering round its forsaken nest."

Soon afterwards in poverty and obscurity, he died in Croft Lane, Dundee.

The tragedy ended not here: Jeannie, his wife, who was devotedly attached to him, followed his

corpse to the grave, with her latest born on her breast, and caught cold, it is supposed, while standing in the damp church-yard. Fever set in, and three weeks after her husband's funeral she was laid by his side.

Of Thom's sons,—one, through the good offices of a Scotch gentleman, has been sent to St. Andrew's, there to receive an education which will fit him for mercantile pursuits,—and the second son, through the influence of Dr. Bowring, has a situation on the Blackwall Railway. How the two infants are provided for, I know not.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## . AMERICAN WRITERS.

SKETCHES OF GENERAL G. P. MORRIS, THE SONG WRITER;  
N. P. WILLIS, "THE PENCILLER BY THE WAY;" AND OF  
JUDGE NOAH.

THE great and vastly increasing popularity of American literature in this country, renders it, I imagine, probable that a few sketches of some of the most eminent transatlantic authors and authoresses themselves may not be uninteresting. During a recent and extended tour through the United States, I had the good fortune to associate with many of the leading men of America on terms of friendly intercourse. The recollection of the hours spent in such society is that of unalloyed pleasure; and with a cheerful remembrance of such interviews, I proceed to sketch a few of those American celebrities, who are only known to thousands on this side of the Atlantic through the media of their manifold productions.

Numerous as are the aspirants of literary fame in our own country, the tribe of writers is inconceivably small, as compared with the multitudes who,

“Raving in the lunacy of ink,  
Snatch up their pens, and publish what they think,”

in the *New World*. Their name is indeed legion. Mrs. Sigourney, the first poetess of America, once assured me that, in the town where she resided at the time I had the pleasure of visiting her, there was scarcely a young lady who did not lay claim to the character of an authoress. Nor are the young gentlemen less prone to commit inkshed.

I had been some week or ten days in the beautiful city of New York, when, having become somewhat accustomed to the intense heat of the climate, and having also got rid of the lassitude which it produced, I determined to present some of the many letters of introduction to distinguished Americans, with which I had been favoured by friends in England. Among them were notes to judges, generals, mayors, colonels, editors, and authors of various classes, with a few to merchants and tradesmen. These latter I put aside, to wait a more convenient season; and selecting a few of the former, I tripped down the steps of the Astor House, and crossing that world-renowned thoroughfare, Broadway, entered the park, passed by the

noble fountain which played, encircled by miniature rainbows, beneath the bluest of skies, and in the clearest of atmospheres, and directed my steps towards Ann Street.

Ann Street, with its neighbour, Nassau Street, may be called the Paternoster Row of New York, for in them are most of the newspapers and periodical publishing shops situated. Over one of these appeared a sign board, on which was emblazoned in gold letters, the words "Mirror Office;" so drawing from my pocket-book two letters, one of them addressed to "General George P. Morris," and the other to "Nathaniel Parker Willis, Esquire," I entered the store.

It was a small square apartment, divided into two portions by an unpainted wooden counter, behind and above which were shelves, on which lay back numbers, and bound volumes of the New York "Mirror." On the wall over the stove were hung five proofs of some of Bartlett's American Views; and a flaming portrait of an American Eagle, whose beak had a "downward drag austere," as Keats says; and who clutched a formidable bunch of thunderbolts in his claws. Hung about the store, too, were sundry bills, declaring that the "New York Mirror," was far and away the cheapest and best literary serial in the States; and some lithographed circulars, which clearly proved, that no more profitable mode of investing

dollars and cents, than by purchasing the said "Mirror," could be hit upon.

When I first entered the office I looked round, but perceived no one, yet fancying that a clerk might be in an inner apartment, I rapped on the counter with a quarter dollar piece. Scarcely, however, had the "silver sound" disturbed the silence of the place, when from behind a railed desk at the end of the counter near the window of the office, emerged a little dapper, brisk-looking gentleman who inquired my business.

Let me more minutely describe him. He was about five feet high, perhaps an inch taller, but certainly not more. His face was full of genial good-humour. Short, crisp curly dark hair, thinly streaked with silver threads, encircled a high, well-formed forehead, beneath which was a pair of the brightest black eyes I ever saw, they absolutely twinkled. The nose was slightly aquiline, and the mouth and chin well formed, the latter being dimpled in the most approved manner. The complexion was dark. Altogether the aspect of the face was very intellectual; not your pseudo pensive, thoughtful sort of expression, that mock sentimentality which sentimental young gentlemen with turn down collars rejoice in, but a pleasant, vivacious sparkling Tom Moorish look, which at once convinced you that its owner was open-hearted as well as open-faced. The gentleman I am alluding

to had a sort of military air about him, although he had by no means a military figure; and I certainly was rather taken aback, when, in reply to my question whether General Morris was within, he replied with a smile,

“ Yes. I am General Morris.”

It is not much to be wondered at, that I felt some surprise at thus unexpectedly confronting so potent a personage as a great military commander, for it must be remembered that I had not yet been a fortnight in a country where it is common enough for a colonel to mix your toddy, and a mayor to black your boots. It was not long before I became better informed on such subjects. The very title, “general,” had conveyed the idea of a tall, pompous looking warrior, with plumed cap, fierce mustachios, and dangling sabretasch, clad all in scarlet, and shining with gold. How different the appearance of the brisk little man before me, who, instead of a plume, brandished a pen, and was surrounded by hot pressed reams, instead of hot blooded soldiers, and in whose peaceful armoury books superseded bullets.

It was not, however, in his military capacity that I now sought the acquaintance of General George P. Morris. Years and years before, I and hundreds besides me in Old England, had, in many a street, lane and alley, heard from barrel-organs, hurdy-gurdies, bagpipes, and fiddles,—

aye, and from grand pianos too, played on by fair fingers, in still summer evenings, as we wandered through quiet squares, the windows in the houses of which were half-open to let the melody stream through barriers of beautiful flowers—I say years ago I had heard the general's song of "Woodman, spare that Tree," then little dreaming that I should ever grasp its author by the hand. But it so happened, that no sooner had Morris perused Dr. ——'s letters, than the best song-writer—I mean the most popular song-writer America has produced, bade me a hearty welcome, and I felt myself at once at home with him. Perhaps he was a little more cordial than he might otherwise have been, in consequence of a sly compliment I paid him in the course of conversation, by an allusion to, and a comparison with, another hero of the sword and pen—Körner.

I do not imagine that General Morris has seen much military service, for he is merely the officer of a militia corps, a very peaceful and harmless body of citizens in general, their operations being chiefly confined to a muster once a month, after which they return, and laying aside martial glory, repose in imaginary laurels in the bosom of their families. His has been almost exclusively a literary life, and like all other writers for the public press, he has experienced a life of great vicissitudes. Employed more as a journalist than as a poet, he

has not produced many original works, and those are not of a very high order, though pleasing enough. Some of his admirers have gone so far as to style him the Moore of America, but such a comparison is quite out of place. The general has written some songs which have had the good fortune to become popular, and has ably conducted various literary serials, but he will never shine as a star of the first magnitude in the hemisphere of his country's literature.

But as my aim is rather to describe persons, than to criticise their productions, I shall say no more respecting Morris's works. As a man, then, there is no one more beloved among all classes who know him in New York, than himself. His kindness, even at times when he can ill afford it, to his distressed literary brethren, is unbounded ; and he has more than once impoverished himself by serving others. Some years ago he had a lovely residence on the banks of the Hudson, but, owing to unfortunate speculations, he was compelled to quit it. In conjunction with another literary man, he has long been connected with the New York press ; and I believe that any one curiously inclined may still see the author of " Woodman, spare that Tree," behind the little railed desk at the end of the little counter in the little office in Ann Street.

Fancy me, reader, still conversing with General Morris, when a stranger—at least to me,—enters the office. He is a tall, dashing-looking fellow, dressed in the extreme of dandyism, and with an air of fashionable languor about him; nodding familiarly to the general, who smilingly returns his salute. He drops into a chair—stretches out his well-shaped legs, and glancing somewhat affectedly towards the ceiling, draws, with primrose-coloured gloved fingers, a fragrant cigar from between his lips, and appears dreamily to watch the blue and circling rings of smoke, which, ascending, change into fantastic wreaths, and disappear.

The stranger is a handsome fellow enough, and he seems to be perfectly aware of the fact. It is evident, too, that he cultivates his personal graces, although Time has slightly thinned the *curling* hair, which is nattily disposed over a broad, but not very high forehead. His eyes are blue, and sweet in their expression; but at their outer angles are those mortal enemies to youthful appearance—the crow's feet; the cheeks are not so plump as they were ten years ago; and there is a sallownish tinge on them, partly the result of climate, and partly ascribable to champagne. The nose is short, and *retroussé*. The mouth well shaped, and very expressive; and if the chin does not precisely resemble that of Antinous, it is at least as decent-looking a chin as one would wish to see amongst



ordinary mortals. The face is round, and when the dew of youth was on it, it must have been altogether an intellectually handsome one, despite a dash of effeminacy, which, indeed, still clings to it. Then as to the figure of Mr. ———, (I must not let you into the secret of his name yet, though doubtless, it is a familiar one to you;) it is, to use a trite phrase, what is called "good," that is—it is tall and well-proportioned, and if little General Morris might be described, (and most truly does Goldsmith's line apply to him,) is

"An abridgment of all that is pleasant in man,"

the individual now specially alluded to, so far as externals are concerned, may be spoken of as a very nice-looking fellow, not at all curtailed, either in height or breadth, of Nature's fair proportions.

I had some indistinct recollection of having seen that face somewhere before; but where, for the life of me, I could not imagine. It might have been in a theatre—in the street—in a church, or in a drawing-room. No, it had not been in any such sort of place;—a thought struck me, I had seen some one like him in a book. There was a resemblance to some flippant portrait of some poet, prefixed to some volume or other. I had not long to remain in doubt, for Morris, after having despatched a boy with a bundle of "Mirrors," said—

“ Mr. —, let me have the pleasure of making you acquainted with Mr. Willis.”

So was the trifling mystery cleared up ;—I *had* seen the portrait of Mr. Willis prefixed to some one or other of his light, sparkling “Pencillings,” but candour compels me to declare that Lady Blessington’s pet American was most outrageously flattered, and that the mere shadow of a general resemblance was but as the accessory of a picture, in which the coat, waistcoat, and pantaloons of the sitter formed the most conspicuous object,—just as we see in some one of Chalon’s lady portraits, a pyramid of satin and lace with a pretty but insipid face peeping from its apex.

Who has not heard of N. P. Willis,—Namby Pamby Willis, as some slashing critic on this side of the water christened him? Every one is familiar with his “Pencillings by the Way,” and his “Inklings of Adventure,” and his “People I have met,” and his many really beautiful poems, on which, after all, his reputation will be based. I had heard a good deal about him, and therefore, when introduced, regarded him with much interest. On my name being mentioned, he asked whether I was the author of some lines on the death of Campbell, which I had a few days before forwarded to the “Mirror,” of which I may remark, he and Morris were joint editors and proprietors. After kindly complimenting me on them, we

diverged into other topics of conversation, in the course of which, on my remarking that I had a letter of introduction to Major Noah, also the editor of a New York journal, he very politely offered to accompany me ; and accordingly bidding adieu to General Morris, who told me he was about to attend to a review, (not of soldiers, but of Featherstone's Journey through the Slave States, then just represented in America) we sauntered off arm in-arm.

"Let me be your Asmodeus," said Willis, as we halted before the Clinton Hotel, at whose door a group of gentlemen were standing. "I know most of the 'lions' here," he added, "and shall feel pleasure in showing some of them up."

"Just notice that tall man in the bear-skin overcoat ; he is the first naturalist in the world."

I gazed in the direction indicated, and saw a man of tall stature wrapped in a shaggy coat, surrounded by several persons, who evidently regarded him with considerable interest. This rather singular-looking personage would have excited curiosity anywhere. I said he was tall—he must have been more than six feet high, and was proportionally stout ; his head, uncovered, was matted thickly with grey hair, which, allowed to grow wildly, streamed over the collar of his coat. Between two small, deeply-set, and marvellously keen eyes—eyes which, like bright black points, glisten-

ing in a cavern, were fringed with curved eye-brows, was a nose, so hooked and beak-like, that it seemed rather to belong to a bird of the vulture tribe than to the "human face divine." The mouth was thin-lipped and compressed, and the expression of the whole countenance conveyed the idea of indomitable courage, firmness, and self-reliance. In the hand of this strange and striking-looking personage was a mighty stick ; and at first I took him for one of those stout backwoodsmen whom Cooper has so graphically described. "Who is he?" I asked of my companion.

"Audubon, the author of the greatest work on natural history on record—'The Birds of America,' " was Willis's reply.

The story of this remarkable man's adventures in the pathless wilds of America, while collecting materials for his great work, must be familiar to most readers. In three enormous volumes, which his amazing industry has produced, are to be found representations of almost every species of bird known on the American continent, each of them drawn by himself, of the natural size, and coloured with astonishing fidelity. I afterwards had the pleasure of going over portions of this work, in company with its author, who sat with me in his garden, beneath one of the splendid magnolias of Louisiana, and also of seeing the originals from which they were drawn. At that time Audubon

was busy on "The Quadrupeds of America," a work now in course of publication, and his daughters were engaged in colouring the engravings. Nothing could exceed his anxiety to ensure accuracy in his delineations; and even Landseer himself might scarcely infuse more *life* into his masterly pictures, than has the American naturalist thrown into his sketches. In their line they are perfect; in character, as exemplified in the portraits of birds, Bewick did not surpass him.

Great were the difficulties which Audubon had to surmount whilst engaged in his work. To show the energy of the man, I will relate a characteristic anecdote. After two years' wandering in the woods, he had collected a precious assortment of birds' skins and drawings, all taken from the birds immediately after he had shot them, many of them being hitherto unheard-of specimens. The chest containing the result of an enormous amount of solitary labour he left in the care of a friend, while he visited his family. On his return he opened the chest, intending to spend six months in arranging his materials for publication, prior to his resuming his adventures; but, to his utter surprise and consternation, he discovered, instead of skins and drawings, a confused collection of scattered feathers, and fragments of paper. Rats had penetrated the chest, and destroyed the precious fruit of so much anxious toil. But did Au-

dubon despair? By no means. Instead of wasting time in useless regrets, he shouldered his rifle, sought the woods again, and in three years accomplished his self-imposed and stupendous task.

Willis introduced me to Mr. Audubon, and we had a glass or two of julep together—that is, Willis and myself; for the bird historian took water only, of which, however, he drank enormous quantities. He told me that in all his first wanderings, toils, and privations, spring water had been his only beverage—a fact which speaks strongly in favour of total abstinence. His conversation was vigorous, and smacked of the woods. His manners, though rough, were by no means uncouth; and I left him with the impression that so fine a specimen of a genuine child of nature I never before had, and probably never shall, see again.

Some months after this, I was travelling down the Mississippi, when one morning, just in the grey dawn, I quitted my hot berth, and went on deck. Seated on a pile of trunks, wrapped in a huge shaggy coat, I at once recognised Audubon. He was leaning with one arm on the rail of the steamer, and in the hollow of his left arm lay a very long barrelled rifle. I sauntered towards him, and we gradually fell into conversation. As the light increased, he pointed out various objects on either shore, but which, though my eyes are, or were, none of the worst, I could not discern.

“Do you see that bird?” he asked, after peering for a moment from beneath his shaggy brows.

“Where?” I inquired, for though I strained my eyes to the utmost, no bird could I see.

“There, just beyond that bluff; it is a small duck, and is floating on a drift log,” he remarked.

At length, I made out the log—but bird saw I none. Some of the sailors were as much at fault as myself, although Audubon declared, that he could not only see the bird, but discern its colours; and he named the tints.

On shot the steamer, and a glance of sunshine falling on the broad waves, the log was plainly seen. As we neared it, a duck, alarmed by the noise of the paddle-wheels soared from it. Quick as lightning Audubon elevated his piece, fired, and the bird fell—it was recovered, and proved to be a very minute specimen of the diver tribe, and its colours were exactly as Audubon had described them. This is one instance only of his wonderful keenness of vision. I have heard of many other equally striking; but I am unwilling to record any which did not come under my own observation.

The last time I saw Audubon was in 1845. In the autumn of that year, a disastrous fire broke out in Broadway, New York; and, in consequence of an explosion of gunpowder, the warehouses, where all the copperplates of the great work on

the Birds of America were deposited, was demolished, and the plates, or a great number of them destroyed. One morning, while gazing on the ruins, I observed Audubon standing on a heap of stones amidst bent and battered plates, the wrecks of a life's labour, as calmly as though ruin was not staring him in the face. Those plates were the sole fortune of himself and family. Repining, however, he knew, was useless; and I afterwards heard, that he was busily engaged in repairing those plates which were damaged, and re-engraving the utterly destroyed ones. On this work, I believe, he is still engaged.

Chaperoned by Willis, we soon reached Major Noah's, whose office was in Nassau Street. "Here," said Willis, "I will leave you;" and after a kind invitation to dine with him, I mounted a flight of stairs, which I thought would never end in a summit, but which, at length, terminated at a door, on which was written, "Star Office." I knocked, and a voice from within, bade me enter.

I opened the door, and found myself in a printing-office. Half a dozen young men, and some young women, or rather young ladies, as they are universally called in America, were setting up articles for the forth-coming number of the "Star;" I asked one of them, if Major Noah was to be seen.

"Wal," said a bilious looking man, pointing



towards a door at the other end of the office. "I guess, if you'll go through that door, and keep right a head, you'll find the judge in his office."

I soon found myself in the presence of the gentleman who, in his own portly person, represented the Army, the Bench, and the Press; and, as Major Noah is considered to be one of the fathers of the New York press, and, moreover, is a bit of a character, I will give a slight sketch of him.

He was rather tall, very stout, very red in the face, and apparently very good humoured. No one could, for a moment, mistake his Mosaic origin, but, I venture to say, that, very few would have taken him for that hard-working personage, the editor of a newspaper. Yet he has been one for many years; and was the first who engaged an English correspondent. Judge Noah is one of the most speculative of men; he devises the most remarkable schemes possible. His last freak was the getting up a company to purchase Grand Island, a tract of land not far above the Falls of Niagara, on which he intended to found a Jewish colony. But the "tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast" did not enter heartily into the scheme; and Judge Noah, instead of ruling in his little territory over his brethren, has abandoned his Utopian idea, and may daily be seen, panting

and perspiring, as he hurries his corpulent frame along, from his office to the police-court, where he dispenses pains and penalties to the rascals and rowdies of the Empire City.

*FINIS.*

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